

Three New Directors Elected to Board; Rep. Dean Speaks at GMM

by Karen Plourde, Editor, Weavers Way Shuttle

WEAVERS WAY’S BOARD OF Directors will welcome three new representatives following the results of the Co-op’s Board elections at its Spring General Membership Meeting on May 3. Ariel Baumet, Melissa Easy and Cedric Hardy were the top three vote get-

ters in this year’s race, out of a field of six candidates. They will be officially installed at next month’s board meeting. The GMM, which featured Congresswoman Madeleine Dean as guest speaker, took place at the Ambler Borough Hall and was attended by about

150 Co-op members. Dean’s presentation was preceded by one from Weavers Way General Manager Jon Roesser, who gave an overview of the Co-op’s financial performance through the third quarter of FY2025 and offered insight into recent trends in the grocery industry.



photos by Chris Raines
Guest speaker Congresswoman Madeleine Dean.

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Community-Owned,
Open to Everyone

Help Us Revive
Our Education
Committee

by David Woo, for the Shuttle



PRINCIPLE #5 OF THE INTERNATIONAL Cooperative Alliance’s 1995 Principles of Cooperation is Education, Training and Information. Without the wisdom and knowledge derived from these principles, an uninformed population will lack crucial data points to make decisions that benefit the organization.

Making good decisions isn’t easy for us even as individuals. Having to make decisions as members with different preferences across a broad spectrum of likes and dislikes is especially difficult.

Over the years, Weavers Way has done a decent job of integrating the will of the membership, but it’s impossible to make everyone happy. However, the Co-op isn’t a caucus for those who disagree with the whole; it exists so we can meet our mutual needs.

Weavers Way’s Education Committee has lain dormant for a few years, but it’s time to reconstitute it to guide the implementation of Principle #5. I invite all interested members to join me to meet

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The Shuttle

MAY 2025

Since 1973 | The Newspaper of Weavers Way Co-op

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Field Assistants Share Skills in New Settings

Editor’s Note: Earlier this year, Weavers Way Farms welcomed two new field assistants on our growing spaces at Saul Agricultural High School in Roxborough and Awbury Arboretum in East Germantown. Their profiles are below.



Isabel Najjar



Lucy Jones

Continuing a Big Pivot from
TV to Working on Farms

by Isabel Najjar, Henry Got Crops Field Assistant

I hail from beautiful Central Pennsylvania, and my mom worked for the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture for much of my

childhood. Though I didn’t appreciate how special it was at the time, her relationships with the farmers who grew our food, and her belief in local, sustainable agriculture informed and influenced my perspective and value system.

Because my love for farming had not yet awakened, I studied film in college and spent a couple years post-grad living in New York, working on TV sets. That

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Solar Panels,
Co-op Roof
Take Two

by Marion Storey Biddle, for the Shuttle



THE ROOF OF AN OLD GARAGE IN Mt. Airy is about to get the latest in solar panels, thanks to the second joint effort by Weavers Way and the Clean Energy Co-op.

Weavers Way is again working with Clean Energy to install solar panels, this time on the roof of Weavers Way Mercantile. Steve Hebden, Weavers Way’s former maintenance manager, worked with Clean Energy on last year’s installation on the roof of Weavers Way Germantown. He said that project went smoothly and has successfully contributed to Weavers Way’s efforts to be as sustainable as possible.

“Along with living car-free, eating a vegan diet and avoiding long flights, generating and using renewable solar energy is one of the most effective ways to reduce our carbon emissions,” he said. “Let’s do another roof!”

Joy Baxter, chair of the Southeast Pennsylvania chapter of Clean Energy,

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McGoran to Discuss Latest Book at Booked

FORMER SHUTTLE EDITOR Jon McGoran will be in Chestnut Hill next month to promote his latest science fiction thriller, “The Price of Everything,” which came out early last month.

McGoran will discuss his work on June 8 at Booked, 8511 Germantown Ave., from 6 to 8 p.m. The book is McGoran’s seventh. He previously wrote the young adult sci-fi thrillers “Spiked,” “Spliced,” and “Splintered,” and the bio-

(Continued on Page 18)



Jon McGoran



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Editor’s Note

by Karen Plourde, Editor,
Weavers Way Shuttle



A FEW DAYS BEFORE THIS SHUTTLE dropped, the Co-op’s new website went live. Have you checked it out yet? It’s pretty spiffy, and brings our food and other offerings to the forefront.

The new site also gives the Shuttle a more prominent footprint. Instead of one little square of info about the current issue, we feature three stories from it, with photos. Click on the orange script below that section to read the current issue and get to our archives.

I’m eager to hear from those who read the paper online about the new format. I don’t think it’s a whole lot different from the previous version, but you know better. Take a test drive soon and let me know what you think.

This month, we’ve got another jam-packed issue. Our coverage includes the results of our recently-concluded Board elections, vendor spotlights on Mt. Airy’s Good Host Plants and Fort Washington’s Merritt Meadows Farm and a solid how-to guide for composting at home.

In the center spread (close to it, anyway), you’ll find the Co-op’s annual report for 2024. If you want to see how our sales fared in the last fiscal year, a graph of our active member households since 2011, the annual weight of our farm harvest in pounds since 2017 and more, you’ll want to page through. If you didn’t know it already, reading the report is confirmation that Weavers Way is for sure an active entity.

Before I sign off for the month, I want to shout out the proofreaders for this issue: Connie Garcia-Barrio, Wendy Greenberg, Kara Tennis and Marisol Villamil. The launching of the new website has also been accompanied by a big change in the system for proofing the Shuttle. This quartet was up for the challenge and helped make this a far easier transition than I anticipated. I may even have to admit that (gasp!) the new system is an improvement over the old one. Hopefully, we’ll only go onward and upward from here.

Catch you in the pages next month.

Drown Your Political Sorrows with Kamala Cake or Cupcakes

by Charlotte Kidd, for the Shuttle

CHATting IN THE POOL AFTER aquasize one day, my friend Barb decried the morning’s politics, then mentioned her upcoming birthday party.

Hmm...politics, I thought, then “Where is Kamala?” I miss her laugh, joie de vivre, smile, hope.

“I can bring a Kamala Cake,” I offered, leaning over the blue-white lane line.

Barb’s eyes sparkled. “That cupcake was decadent,” she said. “Yes, a cake. I have the candles.”

We seized the moment to celebrate and resist with a delicious treat I adapted during the last presidential campaign. This time, though, I moved more mindfully. Even the ingredients and the grocery store they were sourced from had to resound blue.

During last year’s Democratic Convention, Chicago bakery owner Stephanie Hart created a handsome cake honoring Harris called “A Taste of Democracy.” She designed it to reflect what Kamala represented and what was at stake.

In a Fox TV interview during the convention, Hart recalled when Harris visited her Brown Sugar Bakery in 2021. She ordered German chocolate cake, which became the base of Hart’s creation last fall.

“I wanted the cake to represent more than just what she likes, because Kamala had to be a whole thing,” Hart said in the interview. “The center of this cake is German chocolate, which I felt was perfect because it’s a grounded, rooted, earthy cake. But I wanted the outside to be exciting, like she is.”

Harris embodies the best of diversity, she added, so the cake is a combination of scrumptious ingredients. “It is wrapped in a mixed whipped cream... mixed with chocolate and caramel.” She represented a “unity of all shades so I draped it with white caramel and chocolate. It’s light and airy and joyful like the energy that she’s brought to this campaign.”

My first version was a tilting, two-layer sheet cake for a lively birthday party of about 25 — nothing as grand as the Brown Sugar Bakery original. The ingredients were as follows:

- A box of German chocolate cake mix
- A box of dark chocolate cake mix
- Two containers of buttercream frosting



- A container of German chocolate or caramel frosting
- Caramel sauce
- Chocolate sauce
- Shredded coconut

I later made a yummy, if messy, round two-layer cake and dozens of cupcakes for a Together Women Rise dinner and a few political events.

The Politics of Ingredients

Going forward, I want to ensure future Kamala cakes are blue through and through. Many readers might be familiar with the concept of intentional buying — shopping intentionally while keeping in mind environmental impact, where ingredients are sourced from, working conditions, etc.

Shopping at Weavers Way is usually foremost in my mind for select items — fresh produce, baked goods, cheeses, meats and fish, prepared food, eggs. For seldom-bought cake mixes and pre-made frostings, I look to supermarkets.

OpenSecrets, a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, charitable organization based in Washington, D.C., tracks money in U.S. politics and its effects on elections and public policy. Money comes from the organization’s members, employees or owners and political action committees. Their user-friendly, data-packed website (www.opensecrets.org) was where I started.

Turns out the food companies and affiliated grocery stores offering the required baking supplies have interesting political donation patterns. Weis Markets posted only individual donors’ contributions, and that comparison skewed Democratic. Acme Markets, a/k/a Albertson’s, contributed to both parties in congressional and federal elections, and leaned more toward Democrats. Giant Markets, owned by Ahold Delhaize, donated almost equally to Democrats and Republicans. Shop Rite (Wakfern Food Corp) tilted Republican by nearly 75%.

Whole Foods, owned by Amazon, last reported political contributions in 2016. They skewed strongly Republican.

Choosing which type of cake and frosting mixes was easier, because there were only General Mills and Duncan Hines versions of German chocolate cake mix. General Mills, which makes Betty Crocker and Pillsbury cake mixes, poured nearly 75% of its political money into Democratic coffers. Duncan Hines, on the other hand, ran significantly Republican.

The Shuttle is published by
Weavers Way Cooperative
Association.

Statement of Policy

The purpose of the Shuttle is to provide information about co-ops, healthful food and other matters of interest to Weavers Way members as consumers and citizens.

Weavers Way members are welcome to submit articles (about 500 words) and letters to the editor (200 words) on subjects of interest to the Co-op community.

No anonymous material will be published; all submissions must include an email or phone number for verification. The Shuttle retains the right to edit or refuse any article or letter. Submit to editor@weaversway.coop. Articles and letters express the views of the writers and not those of the Shuttle, the Co-op or its board, unless identified as such.

Advertising

Advertising for each issue is due the 1st of the preceding month, e.g., Dec. 1 for January. Ad rates are online at www.weaversway.coop/shuttle, or call 215-843-2350, ext. 314, or email advertising@weaversway.coop. Advertised products or services may not be construed as endorsed by Weavers Way Co-op.



by Kieran McCourt, Weavers Way Ambler

Swiss chard is the odd man out when it comes to leafy greens. While often bright and colorful, it hasn’t gotten the spotlight like kale and its cousin spinach, which often is less work to use. But this easy-to-grow and nearly-always-available leafy green can add variety, while competing nutritionally with other leafy greens.

Unlike hardier greens, chard is trickier to keep, since the tender leaves can spoil quickly in the fridge. It’s best stored unwashed and wrapped loosely in a towel to wick off excess moisture that would otherwise lead to spoilage. Additionally, if your refrigerator runs cold or has colder areas, a fresh bunch might wilt and blacken before you can use it.

If you grow your own chard or find yourself with an abundance of it during the summer or late fall, it freezes and stores well. Whether blanched or raw, be sure to thoroughly dry the whole or chopped leaves and stems. Doing so will limit the potential for freezer burn.

One of the easiest things to do with chard is sauté the leaves, with or without stems. It “wilts” beautifully and works well as a vegetable side for any meal. This is also one of the first steps you need to take to

Chard’s in the Cards



incorporate chard into other dishes.

Wilted chard can be easily mixed into any number of preparations. Be sure to squeeze it to remove the liquid that sweated out while sautéing, unless your dish will work with a little extra moisture.

Chard is great with eggs in an omelet, quiche or frittata, or with plant-based egg equivalents. It can be mixed into pasta, baked gratin, savory tart, or a cheesy galette. It can also be in the filling for a spanakopita or similar pie with greens, especially during the fall months of its growing season.

Raw, chopped chard is a good addition to soups and stews in the final few minutes of cooking.

While chard’s sturdy and often colorful stems can certainly be canned, they also make an excellent pickled item if kept in the fridge and used up fairly quickly. They’re a crunchy accompaniment to summer salads, sandwiches or burgers.

Co-op Vendor Grew into a Second Career in Flower Farming

by Karen Plourde, Editor, Weavers Way Shuttle

WHEN JENNIFER CHANTZ’ position with a child welfare, adoption and foster care agency was eliminated at the end of 2018, she invested the money she got from her severance package into tulips, anemones and ranunculus (buttercups) that she planted in the half-acre backyard of her and her husband’s Fort Washington home. This wasn’t a form of therapy — she was aiming to start a second career in flower farming.

“My goal was to find eight subscribers, like a CSA. So every week or two weeks, I would deliver flowers to them,” she recalled. “I wanted customers; I didn’t want to just plant stuff without any customers.”

She wound up with 10 subscribers that season. She later set up a website, and in 2021, started selling her mixed bouquets at Weavers Way Ambler. Merritt Meadows Flower Farm — named after her deceased parents — has been blooming ever since.

Long before Chantz became a local fresh flower merchant, she loved to garden. At that time, she put her energy into growing vegetables.

“I even did rotation of crops,” she recalled. “I had four raised beds over there, and each year, I would put something different in each bed and kept track.” She



caption

gave her surplus produce to her parents, who lived at the house up the road and gave her and her husband the land on which they built their house.

In (year?), Chantz discovered Erin Benzakein’s “The Flower Podcast” and was inspired to shift her growing focus. She also took Benzakein’s online flower farming class. Her number of flower selections increased season after season, as did her client base.

Chantz’ road to supplying the Co-op with bouquets began soon after she hired (?) Sharon Marzocco, wife of General Manager Jon Roesser and a beekeeper



credit

at the time, to take care of the bee boxes on Chantz’ property. Marzocco talked up Merritt Meadows to Roesser, who suggested that that the Ambler store would be best suited to adding them as a vendor.

In the last year or so, Chantz has been working on simplifying her operations, because she and her husband now take care of their young grandson once a week. She concentrates on mixed bouquets, supplying about five each to the Mt. Airy and Chestnut Hill stores every week and about 15 to the Ambler store. All of them sell well.

“Mine are different,” she said.



“They’re field grown, [so] they’re looser, airier. I include foliage to fill it out. I designed them so everything’s mixed well, so you can just lop off the bottom and put it in a vase.”

The Delivery Day Grind

On bouquet making day, Chantz gets up at 5:30 a.m., fills her wagon with buckets to hold the flowers she picks and heads down to her beds. “It makes it easier to [put together] a mixed bouquet when things are separated a bit,” she said.

She’s done picking between 7 and 7:30 a.m., depending on the time of the

(Continued on Page 8)

VENDOR SPOTLIGHT

Mt. Airy Native Plant Fan Grew His Passion into a Business

by Karen Melton, for the Shuttle

WHEN JOHN JANICK AND HIS family moved into their first home with a real yard in Mt. Airy in 2008, he sought information on how to make it bird friendly. The expert advice he received as part of an Audubon audit program included Doug Tallamy’s book “Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants.”

Tallamy, an entomologist at the University of Delaware, writes and lectures about the connection between native plants and healthy populations of local insects that have evolved to eat those plants. Insects are a vital protein source for birds, particularly during nesting season.

Ironically, non-native plants became popular with gardeners precisely because local insects do not recognize them as food. But a garden with a good variety of native plants will sustain only minor chewing damage, and you will be supporting the local ecology of plants feeding insects that then feed birds and other wildlife.

As a biology major, Janick was already interested in bugs and birds, but learning about the critical role of native plants in supporting both started him on a new life venture. As he began filling his yard with native plants and trees, and helping interested neighbors do the same, the difficulty of finding the plants and having to drive to nurseries an hour away in Springfield (Delaware County) or Quakertown turned his personal passion into a startup business — thus, Good Host Plants was born.

The business has evolved over the years (a Google search may show one location as closed) and is thriving at Janick’s current West Hortter Street location. You



captions



can view and order from a sizable list of plants, grasses and shrubs at goodhostplants.com.

According to Janick’s website, “A good host plant is one that supplies food resources and habitat for certain beneficial insects or other fauna. A good host receives guests at home.”

Good Host plants come from growers that specialize in natives from the immediate Mid-Atlantic. They’ve evolved to thrive in our specific climate and reflect the genetic diversity of each species.

“Natives” available at big box stores have often been exposed to fertilizers and insecticides. They may be species from far outside our immediate region and are typically cultivars with no genetic diversity. When it comes to resisting disease or resilience to adverse weather, all of this matters, because native plants underpin a healthy ecology.

When asked if his customers have favorites, Janick said that it varies by season. They especially ask for golden ragwort in the spring, milkweeds and coneflowers in the summer and asters in the fall. Having something in bloom from early spring through late fall is also important to support pollinators and other beneficial insects.

Janick maintains a 2,000 square foot-plus meadow of native plants so he can show customers how they will look in a garden. He can provide recommendations for plant combinations, suggest which ones are especially adept at competing with invasives, and which ones can thrive in containers. He sees planting natives and teaching others about their value as one small way to do good in the world — in other words, to be a good host.

A Fading Tradition for Padaung Women of Myanmar

THIS MONTH, THE CO-OP’S Racial Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee looks at aspects of Asian American culture as part of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

Imagine living with a brass, single-coiled concentric ring weighing from five to 25 pounds around your neck. This cultural tradition is practiced by the Paudaung women of Myanmar, who rarely remove their custom-fitted neck ring.

Since the 11th century, “long neck rings” have been an integral part of Paudaung culture. The rings symbolize protection, wealth, beauty, elegance and grace and affirm the wearer’s commitment to community and marriage.

With some exceptions, girls as young as 5 wear the rings. They are considered spiritual conduits that connect the divine and the physical, thinking (head) and behaving (body).

In recent years, younger generations of Paudaung women have stopped wearing the neck rings. This decision has been influenced by cultural reassessments, increased health awareness, mobility restrictions and globalization.

—Rosa Lewis



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**Racial Diversity,
Equity, and
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WEEKLY SPECIAL OFFERINGS:

June 16-20: Puppetry / Make It Grow

June 23-27: Dungeons & Dragons / Cooking

June 30-July 3: Embroidery / Baking

July 7-11: Dungeons & Dragons / Culinary 101

July 14-18: Zines / Loose Parts Designing

July 21-25: Art & Gardening / Speak Your Mind!

July 28-Aug 1: Culinary 101 / Strings and Fabric Play

August 4-8: Dungeons & Dragons / Mixed Media

August 11-15: Book Making / Woodworking

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‘Julie and Julia’ Showcases the Joys and Challenges of French Cooking

by Julia Marie Rose, for the Shuttle

IF YOU WANT TO WATCH A MOVIE IN WHICH MARRIED couples are vibrant, happy and constantly supportive of one another, watch “Julie and Julia” (2009). Does cooking and eating French food do this for people?

The film shows us two stories of women in different eras. One is Julie Powell (played by Amy Adams), a modern young woman in New York City; the other is Julia Child (played by Meryl Streep). Both enjoy cooking; it’s their challenge and passion, something they look forward to doing. Their meals are more than a perfunctory daily obligation; cooking well and in the French tradition is their mountain to climb, their challenge and quest.

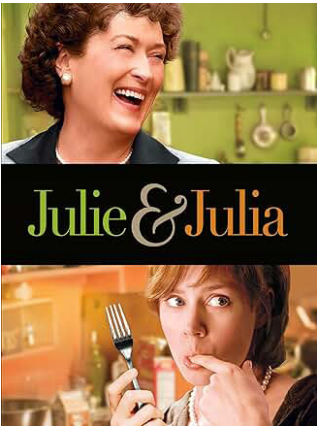
In 2025, we are inundated with technology to help us get things accomplished. In 2009, and in Julia Child’s coming-of-age era in the mid-20th century, people may have had more time and energy for fine cuisine. These days, we look for convenience and ease through apps and artificial intelligence. Yet, the film shows that what is classic and comforting — cooking great food for people you love — never fails. We will always need to eat, and we can improve our cooking skills through effort and joy.

“Julie and Julia” is also about blogging at a time when that was still new. Powell found a great hook for her blog: the challenge of cooking more than 500

recipes within a year. While working a boring, draining job, and after moving to a neighborhood in New York she didn’t like, she was able to find a way to manage her life and find out what she was made of.

In Child’s mid-20th century, she had a lot of extra time on her hands and was not even expected to work. She was married to a man who worked for the foreign service, and while being stationed in Paris, she began to develop a love for French food. To utilize her extra time while there, she began taking cooking classes. Like Powell, she was also excited by challenge and competition. She was able to practice cooking, and family and friends from the United States helped her to finally publish a book of French cooking that was geared to housewives who wanted to cook nutritious meals for their families.

Is good food truly the way to people’s hearts? Economies change, and the old social norm in which one spouse stays home during the day and has the time to cook rich, tantalizing meals, no longer exists. We have plenty of options for takeout nowadays, and people work multiple jobs or keep odd hours. What relevance does fine French cooking — or any careful, nuanced cuisine — have in the 21st century? Do people’s



palates notice fine flavors anymore? Can they appreciate time spent in the kitchen? How different would the stories of Powell and Child look if they had kids and wanted to develop their cooking acumen while working?

It’s unclear what the challenge of French cooking might look like for modern families, but even a little effort toward making better food can improve our lives. We on the East Coast love a challenge, and we believe in working hard. Maybe that can give us the spark to add extra flavor and effort to our night-

ly meals.

In Paris, Child had a wonderful life, and through the joy of cooking she was able to bring joy to others. In New York, Powell endured a frustrating existence and deferred some of her dreams. Even so, she was able to tap into Child’s energy to bring more color and flavor into her world, and found success. “Julie and Julia” encourages us to do the same.

Jana Rose is a local teacher, writer, artist and yoga practitioner. She has written a book for young women and writes about movies weekly on her blog, Ms wonderful.substack.com. You can find more about her on her website: www.janamarierose.com.



As part of the Co-op’s efforts to reduce our use of single-use plastic, customers can purchase certain items in reusable containers.

There are a variety of containers available, with different deposits required.

Total Containers by Department (March 23, 2025)						
Store	Prep	Deli	Bulk	Produce	Beauty & Topical Remedies	Grand Total
Ambler	5,446	1,329	2,298	4,188	0	13,261
Chestnut Hill	6,648	2,084	1,854	0	20	10,606
Mt. Airy	2,895	1,657	2,746	0	1	7,299
Germantown	8	0	146	0	0	154
Totals Sold	14,997	5,070	7,044	4,188	21	31,166
Deposits Refunded						19,770
Return Rate						63%

How the Container Refund Program Works

1. Look for labels with a CRP logo on our shelves.
2. Buy the item – the cost of the container is tied to the product.
3. Once it’s empty, wash the returnable item and take it to the Co-op; you’ll get the cost of the container refunded. All CRP lids and containers must be returned fully prewashed and free of food residue.
4. Return containers in a timely fashion to prevent the Co-op from needing to keep buying more stock, and please do not write on or sticker CRP items.
5. Spread the word to family and friends, so they can help save the Earth, too!



A program run by Echo Systems with support from the Weavers Way Plastic Reduction Task Force

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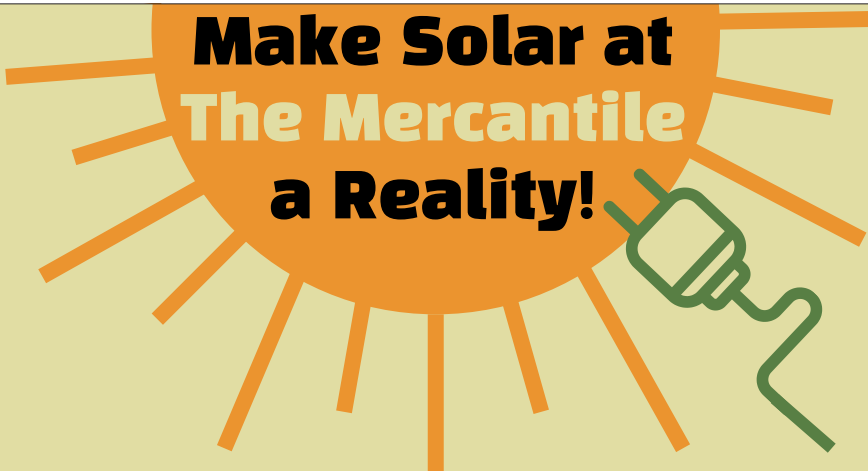


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Germantown: cpoinvil@weaversway.coop

MEMBER BENEFIT

ANOTHER GREAT REASON TO JOIN.

Looking Forward to a New Season of You-Pick Gems

WEAVERS WAY FARMS’ You-Pick field, located at our Henry Got Crops Farm in Roxborough, is made up of just under an acre of organically grown herbs, vegetables and flowers. We intentionally choose to grow these plants using no chemicals and few inputs as a way to create safe and secure relationships with the soils, plants and people who interact with them.

This season, we will offer nearly 40 varieties of flowers, about 15 varieties of herbs and upwards of 20 types of vegetables. Some of our best-loved plants are cherry tomatoes, dahlias, okra, cilantro, and snapdragons. They will be available at different points during the season for our members to cook with, make medi-

cine, and arrange bouquets. Some can even be used to dye fabrics or save for seed!

When I harvest from our you-pick, I feel closer to my local food system and more connected to the seasons. Some of my favorite things to harvest are pigeon peas, nigella, and sea holly.

Our weekly offerings will be accompanied by a newsletter in which we farmers will share recipes and highlight farm-specific events, along with other musings. We hope you’ll join us this season to support sustainable farming and help us cultivate more resilient communities.

—Alé Lomanto, Weavers Way You-Pick Manager and Floral Coordinator

Solar Panels, Co-op Roof, Take Two

(Continued from Page 1)

believes that building solar through community investment is one way to keep moving toward a sustainable future, even as the country reverts to anti-environmental measures.

“The Clean Energy Co-op empowers individuals working together to directly expand renewable energy in their own community,” she said.

Members of Clean Energy combine their small investments to make a large impact through solar projects like the one being undertaken at the Mercantile.

The volunteer-run group has used this method for seven solar projects, ranging from a Unitarian Universalist Congregation church to Weavers Way Germantown.

“Becoming a member of the Clean Energy Co-op helps make Mercantile and future projects a reality,” Baxter said.

It should be noted that the Clean Energy Co-op is different from The Energy Co-op, a Philadelphia-based energy supplier used by many Weavers Way members.

By adding solar to the roof, Weavers Way is again transforming the Mercantile building. Less than a decade ago, the Merc was a garage and vintage salvage reseller; today it is a general store that features local and quirky finds, including a mix of handmade pottery, jewelry and vintage furniture. The building

also houses The Nesting House, a retail store offering new and gently-used items for newborns through age eight, as well as support for new parents.

Under the 25-year power purchase agreement, Clean Energy will own the rooftop solar array and sell the electricity flowing into the building to Weavers Way at a competitive rate. The array’s panels will produce more than enough to cover the needs of the building, which will permit the sale of excess electricity back to PECO.

Weavers Way and Clean Energy Co-op share an interest in solar power and a commitment to the Seven Cooperative Principles. Each co-op is based on the values of democratic member control, member participation, and member focus on improving the environmental health of the community.

The Clean Energy Co-op originated in 2014 through the work of dedicated members in Northeast Pennsylvania, and expanded to include a Southeast chapter in 2021.

A virtual information session will take place on May 12 at 7 p.m. to give people an opportunity to learn more about the Mercantile project. To learn about the Clean Energy Co-op, become a member, and register for upcoming information sessions, go to www.cleanenergy.coop or email info@cleanenergy.coop.

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The Risks and Rewards of Adopting the Tiny House Trend

by Betsy Teutsch, for the Shuttle

THE TINY HOUSE MOVEMENT, A ROBUST, MINIMAL-ist niche flying under the mainstream radar, has really taken off in recent years. Now in their second decade, these structures, which are smaller than mobile homes, have become a popular alternative housing option.

“Tinys”, as they are affectionately nicknamed, are built on top of trailer beds. They can be moved, making them comparable to RVs, and are subject to less regulation.

The biggest challenge to “going tiny” has been finding a site. While some intrepid tiny house folks are off grid, and utilize solar panels, composting toilets, and ported water, most owners prefer conventional grid hookups.

The market has responded. Tiny house communities have sprung up across the country, providing plumbing and power, plus shared amenities. People renting a spot usually plan to stay a while and expand their tiny’s footprint by adding a deck or even an enclosed porch. Should they need to relocate, they can move their home and deck.

Tinys are a maximum of 440 square feet but often expand vertically to include one or two lofts. While slightly smaller than a one-bedroom apartment, their architecture and clever design make them far more interesting, and decks or porches and vertical height expand their usable space. Direct access to the outdoors is a big selling point.

Their width is usually eight feet, though some are wider, and they vary in length, maxing out at about 44 feet. Most of them are custom built, and purchasers choose a company and a model that they can upgrade or modify. YouTube features thousands of tiny owner tours that display the wide variety of clever layout and designs. There is also a community of DIY tiny home builders that do the work at a lower cost.

Tiny houses go for \$100,000 to \$150,000. Their efficiency means utilities cost far less than in a conventional home, and renting a spot is likewise cheaper than renting an apartment. They’re smart, attractive, affordable housing, with neighbors who share a minimalist ethos. Some rent theirs out to generate revenue.

Young couples enjoy their fun and flexibility, and the opportunities they afford to save money earlier in life. Some are motivated by living more sustainably. Their compact design allows for a comfortable life, but like all small dwellings, they discourage unnecessary accumulation.

Accommodating Amenities In Tiny House Interiors

Some tinys have small kitchens, with two burners and an

overhead convection/microwave combo. Most don’t include dishwashers — if you’re living solo, it’s hard to even fill a dishwasher. They typically have large, farm-style sinks. On-demand hot water heaters, with their smaller size, are standard. Built-in storage is a celebrated feature. Many boast narrow, pull-out pantries for spices and staples.

Washers and dryers are a big subject of debate in the tiny house world. Some prefer a single unit combo, which trades off space for time; they take a few hours per load. Others go with separate units, with their double footprint.

Most tinys have a staircase that leads to a sleeping loft. Designers make clever use of it, such as tucking pull-out drawers under each stair. Couches and ottomans are available with concealed empty space. Tiny owners with full ovens often store pans in them. (Think about how much wasted space a typical home has.)

Sleeping lofts generally have low ceilings — enough to sit up in, but rarely tall enough for standing. I would think this would take a lot of getting used to, but adherents seem fine about this tradeoff.

Bathrooms are full size, though many skip the bathtub. Doors generally slide rather than open, to further economize on space.

Those going tiny reflect many demographics. They are ideal for singles, a growing population. Retirees like their affordability and the sociability of tiny house communities, which are intergenerational. Tiny Timbers, in St. Croix, WI, describes itself as an agrihood of individual tiny home dwellers who work together on their garden and farm. Sounds magical!

Why have we not been hearing more about tiny houses? Because most towns don’t allow them, although advocacy and legal cases have broadened their permissibility. The resale market is relatively new, and obviously, real estate agents can’t make much on such a low



base price.

The conventional housing market tends to focus on couples and families and rarely prioritizes solo living. Tiny living is filling a huge market gap.

Even though I live in a large home, I’m hooked on the YouTube channels that feature personal Tiny tours. Each owner is excited about making the big decision to go tiny and shares their home’s favorite features. They genuinely love their ease, and that cutting back on stuff and size means less time spent cleaning and maintaining their homes. This allows them more time and resources to devote to other pursuits.

For many years, I wrote a Shuttle column entitled “The Simplicity Dividend. “I love watching people who simplify their lives and enjoy this new approach. Bravo!

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Dog Tip of the Month

Navigating the Particulars of On-Leash Encounters

by Christopher Switky, for the Shuttle

MANY DOGS ENJOY SOCIALIZING DURING THEIR on-leash walks, making fast friends with the other dogs and people they meet. But some can react adversely to meeting other dogs when restrained by a leash, even though they might do well making new friends in off-leash situations. If this is the case with your dog, or one you know, here are a few things to keep in mind about how dogs get acquainted.

When two dogs see each other from a distance, they start exchanging social signals right away. They do this through the energy that they project via their behaviors, postures, willingness to make eye contact, the duration of that eye contact, and (most critically) the type of movements they make as they approach each other.

Many dogs will take a curved, indirect path as they get closer to an unfamiliar dog, rather than coming toward it straight on, to signal that they’re hoping for a relaxed, non-confrontational encounter. They’ll do other things to establish a polite vibe, such as refraining from sustained direct eye contact (which is confrontational in the canine world), and easing into proximity with the

other dog, rather than rushing into someone’s personal space.

Dogs who are on-leash do not have all the movement options that they would have if they were free. And two on-leash dogs who are walking toward each other on a stretch of sidewalk are being forced to approach in a less-than-ideal way from the standpoint of canine politeness. Some dogs can “roll with it” and have a successful meeting anyway, but others may find the situation stressful, because they’re not free to move and send social signals in the way to which they’re naturally inclined.

Another aspect of the on-leash situation is that dogs do not have the option to easily move away from an encounter if they want to. This can create some stress, and then one or both dogs might act out on that stress, presenting behaviors such as agitated barking, snarling,



photo courtesy Freepik

showing teeth, or even lunging and snapping.

If your dog isn’t happy meeting other dogs when on-leash, that doesn’t necessarily need to change, and it doesn’t mean that you have an “aggressive” or “problematic” pooch. He can still get plenty of enjoyment out of his walks while you advocate for him and make sure that his space is not encroached upon by other (hopefully well-meaning) dogs. Alternatively,, he can socialize with his canine friends in another setting where leashes are not

needed, such as an enclosed yard.

Chris Switky is the founder of Positive Canine Concepts Dog Training and regularly teaches a “Basic Manners for Dogs” class through Mt. Airy Learning Tree. See MtAiryLearningTree.org for more details.

Co-op Vendor Grew into a Second Career in Flower Farming

(Continued from Page 3)

season, and then brings all the flowers indoors to hydrate and cool.

“I really move everything that day or the day after or the day after,” she said.

Chantz has a refrigerator in her finished basement, and during the season, keeps the buckets there along with some of her flowers.

“You can’t cut things when they’re fully open, or they won’t last long,” she said. “When they’re fully open, the bees are doing their thing...when you pull things out when they’re colorful but not fully open, then they’ll open up for the customer.”

Merritt Meadows was certified organic for four years, but because Chantz buys flower seedlings from a conventional grower, she lost that certification. “Everything’s grown organically, still,” she said. She also adheres to no-till and re-

generative practices in her fields.

When I visited Chantz in almost-mid March, her tulips were just popping up and she was getting ready to kick off her season in a few weeks. “Everything’s gonna be slower this year, I think, because of the extreme cold for so long,” she said. She’s able to assemble and sell bouquets until (through?) October.

Merritt Meadows has 2,000 tulip plants, 30 peonies and about 100 dahlia plants in its fields. They share space with mountain mint, daffodils, dianthus, hummingbird poppies — about 90 varieties in all. She turns over the annual beds quickly, so she has room to add more types as the season progresses.

Tasks During the Post Season

Once bouquet deliveries end, Chantz spends all of November putting in new plants and weeding. “Mid-December,

I’m kinda done,” she said. “Everything’s closed up, I’ve covered everything.”

In addition to selling flowers at the Co-op, Chantz also provides floral arrangements for small weddings and other events and some restaurants. Merritt Meadows is also part of the PA Flower Hub, a group of local flower farmers that posts which varieties they have available at a given time, so florists can purchase them off the hub’s website. Members of the hub have to project a week ahead of time what’s going to be blooming in their fields.

A typical Merritt Meadows bouquet contains three of each type of five to 10 different flowers, depending on the time of the season.

“I try to have about 20 different stems in each bunch,” she said. “...I like to have foliage, too. Most of our farmers that are starting only focus on flowers,

but they really need foliage, too. That’s kind of the background for the flowers.”

Chantz, who is also a certified floral designer, hopes that through her efforts, customers will come to appreciate the value of local, field-grown flowers. “The customers I’ve gotten from [Weavers Way Ambler] get it,” she said, “so they’ve asked me to give them flowers for weddings or for events or to design for them.

“I’m just having fun,” she added. “I like being outside, I like playing with flowers...I just have an entrepreneurial spirit that’s kinda fun.”

Merritt Meadows’ CSA customers get their deliveries on Mondays. Chantz delivers bouquets to Weavers Way Mt. Airy and Chestnut Hill on Tuesdays, and to the Ambler store on Thursdays, all before noon. For more information, go to www.merrittmeadows.com.



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Tex Mex Race for Open Space is Back for Its 35th Year

by Gabrielle Fatula, Wissahickon Trails Communications Manager

EVERY SUMMER, AS THE SUN BEGINS TO DIP BEHIND the rooftops of North Wales, something special happens. Neighbors come together, the streets fill with runners, and music floats from the parking lot of a favorite locale. It’s not just a race but a celebration of community, conservation, and a shared commitment to the land we call home.

Now in its 35th year, the Tex Mex 5K Race for Open Space is scheduled for June 25th at 7 p.m. It kicks off at Tex Mex Connection restaurant, 201 E. Walnut St. in North Wales. The race is a cherished tradition for seasoned runners, first-timers and volunteers alike. What began as a neighborhood happening has transformed into a wide-spread event, raising more than \$1 million to support Wissahickon Trails’ work to protect open space and clean water in our region.

Tex Mex Connection is as invested in the planet as it is in its menu. As a certified Green Restaurant since 2009, Tex Mex meets rigorous standards that prioritize sustainability, such as reducing waste, conserving energy, supporting local sourcing, and using



environmentally responsible materials. Their dedication to giving back makes this more than a run; it reflects shared values.

Participants will navigate a mostly flat 5K course through the heart of the borough, supported by cheering onlookers. They will be rewarded at the finish line with dinner, live music and a margarita or craft beer (for the 21-and-over participants). Those who raise or donate \$150 or more will be granted access to the Green Ribbon Tent, a VIP area with a private buffet, frozen drinks, restrooms, and a photo booth.

Registration is \$55 through June 13th, and \$60 beginning June 14th. Entry includes a meal, drink, race photo, and access to one of the most spirited summer nights around. The race is capped at 1,300 runners and typically sells out in advance.

If running isn’t your thing, there are still ways to gather and celebrate. Volunteers are the backbone of this event and will be treated to dinner, a drink and a \$10 gift card to Tex Mex.

To register or learn more, visit www.wissahickontrails.org.

Help Us Revive Our Education Committee

(Continued from Page 1)

and decide what we should do with this committee.

We’ll be meeting on May 15 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the parlor at Summit Presbyterian Church, 6757 Greene St. in Mt. Airy. Enter the building from Greene Street. The parlor is upstairs on the right. You can also attend virtually. Zoom credentials will be sent when you RSVP to wooo3d@gmail.com. If you can’t make that meeting, there will be a second one on May 17 from 10 to 11 a.m. in the café at Weavers Way Ambler. That meeting will be in-person only. All who attend will earn working member credit.

I’m a longtime member and advocate for cooperative enterprise, having served on the Membership Com-

mittee, Leadership Committee and Board of Directors. I’ve seen the Co-op grow from one building on the corner of Carpenter and Greene to four main stores, two wellness/pet locations, a mercantile specializing in mid-century modern furniture, two farm locations within city limits, a warehouse, a nonprofit, numerous member committees, a paid staff of just over 350, and the financial wherewithal to weather the ups and downs of a volatile economy.

Our co-op began with a man in the 1970s who wanted to engage his neighbors and start a food-buying club to save money and avoid poor produce at the local chain supermarket. You can see his name, Jules Timmerman, on the bench outside the Mt Airy store.

I believe in the community we have gathered over the years and would like to see us all become better informed, now that we have close to 14,000 member households. That is quite the change from the 1,000 to 2,000 member households when I first joined in the 1990s.

It’s time to better meet the Principle #5 needs of this growing co-op with the tools and resources we did not have 30 to 50 years ago. To do that, the Education Committee needs a reboot.

Please RSVP to wooo3d@gmail.com. Bring your membership card so I can pass along your work credit to our membership manager.

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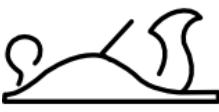
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A By-the-Numbers Guide to Home Composting

by Colleen Falicki, for the Shuttle

MAY 4 TO 10 IS INTERNATIONAL COMPOST Awareness Week. This year’s theme, “Sustainable Communities Begin with Compost,” reminds us that composting is an essential tool for building healthier communities and fighting climate change.

As the founder and owner of Back to Earth Compost Crew, I often lead compost workshops for businesses and organizations in the community. To celebrate International Compost Awareness Week, I’m sharing the Five Easy Steps to Home Composting. Give it a try, and if you have questions, please reach out.

1. Your Bin and Where to Put It

To begin, you’ll want to find a bin that works for your space. There are many that can be hidden into the landscaping and others that can be made by hand using old pallets; it all depends on the look you’re going for and your budget.

No matter what type of bin you choose, you’ll want to place it where it’s easily accessible, especially during the winter. It’s also important to locate the bin near a faucet or other source of water. If you have a garden, place the bin nearby. Our favorite home composter is called the Geobin. It’s lightweight, easy to put together and budget-friendly.

2. Add Greens/Browns

Collect scraps in a countertop container; it doesn’t have to be fancy. We use an old ceramic cookie jar. The motto is that if it grows, it goes. Chop scraps into small pieces so they break down faster.

When adding to your pile, alternate wet and dry ingredients; keep in mind a 3:1 ratio. Start a new pile with small sticks at the bottom for aeration. The formula is one Green to three Browns. Always cover greens (food scraps) with browns when adding them to an outdoor pile or bin. Never leave food scraps exposed.

Green waste (nitrogen) — wetter: fruits, veggies, eggshells (wash first), tea bags, coffee grounds, bread, cereal, pasta rice and nuts.



captions



Brown waste (carbon) — drier: brown leaves, shredded newspaper, small pieces of cardboard, tissue paper, paper towels and the roll, toilet paper rolls and napkins.

Note: Do not add meat, bones, dairy products or grease of any kind. Also, refrain from adding diseased plants or weeds.

3. Turn Your Compost

If you purchase a tumbler, turning your compost will be easy — and fun for the kids. Turn a tumbler every three to four days.

With an open pile or other container, a pitchfork is the way to go. You’ll want to turn the pile once a week or so to keep it aerated. Decomposition happens when microbes have oxygen to break down the compost. Be sure to turn it.

4. Water Your Compost

Your compost pile should feel like a wrung-out sponge. If it’s too dry, it will take longer to break down and if it’s too wet, it may begin to smell.

5. Use your Finished Compost

To find out if your compost is finished, put a little into a plastic bag and place the bag on a windowsill for three days. When you open the bag, it should smell like earth. If it has an ammonia smell to it, it’s not finished.

Once finished, compost will improve the soil structure, help to retain water, protect plants from diseases and provide many other benefits. Add about a quarter to a half inch of compost to the top of your soil, or no more than 20% finished compost to soil. Remember: healthy soil = healthy plants!

Back to Earth Compost Crew was founded in 2017 by local mom Colleen Falicki. BTECC’s mission is to keep food waste out of landfills and back into the soil in suburban Philadelphia. They provide residential curbside compost pickup, commercial compost services, compost collection sites and compost education. They offer a first month free trial of their curbside pickup service. Visit backtoearthcompost.com.

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FISCAL YEAR 2024

annual report for members

Data in this report may be for either the fiscal or calendar year.

from the gm

May 2025

My colleagues and I are pleased to present the Co-op's 2024 Annual Report. 2024 was a year of considerable achievement, as I hope you will see if you take a few minutes to go through these pages.

Of course, our big achievement was the opening of our Germantown store, now one year old this month. Since the day it opened, our newest store has exceeded all expectations, with sales far higher than our (admittedly conservative) estimates. On a typical day, the store brings more than 900 shoppers to Chelten Avenue. We've created 58 new jobs, most of which have been filled by folks in the neighborhood. All in all, Weavers Way Germantown is a success we can all be proud of.

Last year also saw explosive growth in Co-op membership. Total membership grew by 2,269 households, a 20% increase overall. As expected, much of that growth took place in Germantown and East Falls, but we also saw considerable growth in Roxborough, Glenside and Fort Washington.

Our needs-based discount program, Food for All, saw its biggest year-over-year growth in its 10-year history. At the start of 2024, 356 households were participating in the program; by year's end, that number had risen to 617 households, an increase of 73%. Food for All is a vital tool in ensuring that healthy, locally grown and produced food is accessible to everyone in the neighborhoods we serve.

The Weavers Way Community Fund, our affiliated nonprofit, raised over \$30,000 in 2024. That total went to offset the Co-op's food access efforts, including Food for All and the community fridges we support. As an IRS-approved 501(c)3 nonprofit, we expect WWCF will play an ever-increasing role in addressing food insecurity in greater Northwest Philadelphia.

We continue to find new and creative ways to engage with a wide range of community partners, including A Step Up Academy, Awbury Arboretum, Germantown Community Fridges and The Clean Energy Co-op, all of which are highlighted in this year's report. Now more than ever, we must recognize that much of our Co-op's success stems from the strength of the relationships we have with our expanding network of community partners.

In 2024, we took the first steps toward our next major project: the renovation of our now 15-year-old Chestnut Hill store. It is still in the planning stages and will take place over several years. Work will probably begin in early 2026, subject to business conditions.

Those business conditions are unknown, as we enter a period of economic instability triggered by policy-related uncertainty. Fortunately, the Co-op's accomplishments in 2024 have positioned us well to navigate through whatever might come next.

Thank you for your continued support of our Co-op. I wish you a happy and healthy springtime.



Jon Roesser, General Manager

weavers way's ends

Weavers Way Cooperative Association exists to provide commercial and community services for the greater good of its members and community, to champion the cooperative model and to strengthen the local economy.

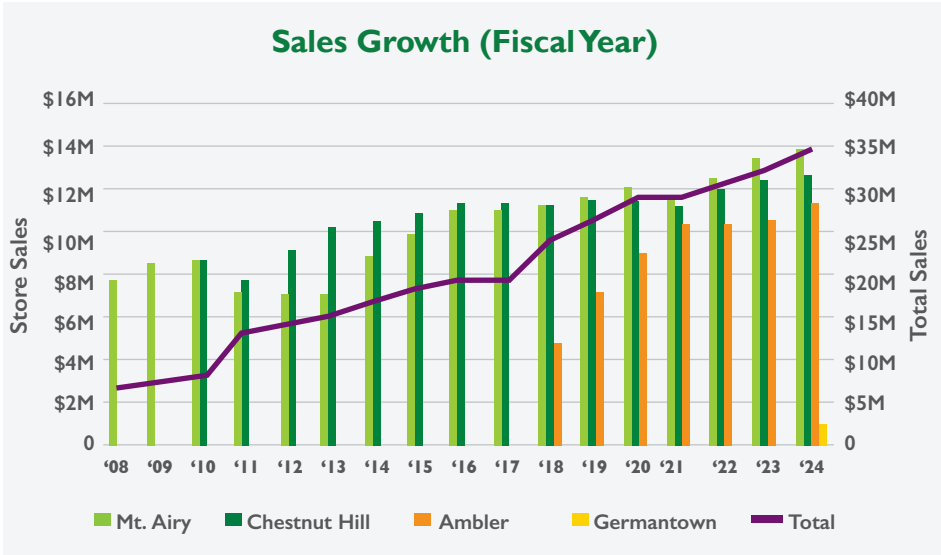
As a result of all we do:

- END 1** There will be a thriving and sustainable local economy providing meaningful jobs, goods and services to our members and the community.
- END 2** Our community will have access to high quality, reasonably priced food, with an emphasis on local, minimally processed and ethically produced goods.
- END 3** There will be active collaborative relationships with a wide variety of organizations in the community to achieve common goals.
- END 4** Members and shoppers will be informed about cooperative principles and values; relevant environmental, food and consumer issues; and the Co-op's long-term vision.
- END 5** Members and shoppers will actively participate in the life of the Co-op and community.
- END 6** The local environment will be protected and restored.
- END 7** Weavers Way will have a welcoming culture that values diversity, inclusiveness, and respect.

sales

Sales growth has been exceptional, particularly with the opening of the new Germantown store. Sales growth for fiscal 2024 (ending June 30, 2024) was only slightly impacted by the opening of Weavers Way Germantown in May.

For the first half of fiscal 2025 – the second half of calendar 2024 – during which the Germantown store was open for the entire period, sales growth has averaged more than 21%.



Industrywide sales growth has been running approximately 5%, with much of that growth coming from discount chains (Grocery Outlet, Aldi) and price clubs (Costco, BJ's).

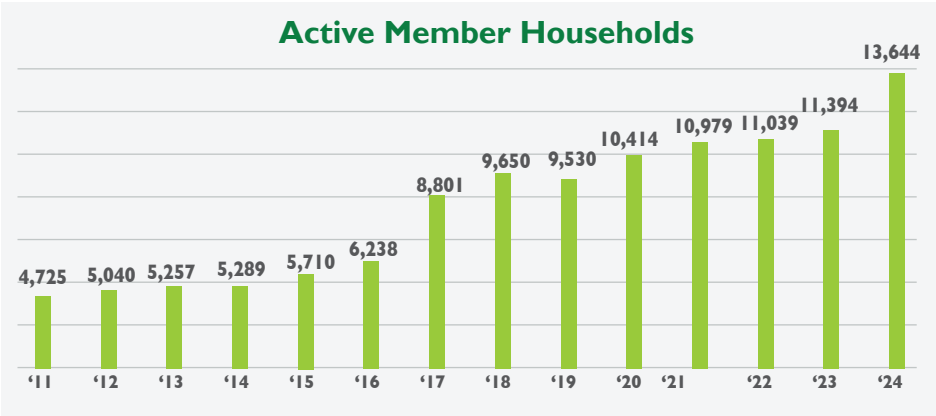
Sales Growth by Store

	Current	Prior	% Change
Mt. Airy (Main)	\$6,441,454	\$7,082,606	-9.05%
Mt. Airy (Mercantile)	\$123,630	\$114,557	7.92%
Chestnut Hill	\$6,478,496	\$6,424,663	0.84%
Ambler	\$5,951,114	\$5,592,510	6.41%
Saul Farm Market	\$345,553	\$289,278	19.45%
Total Same Store Sales	\$19,340,247	\$19,503,614	0.84
Germantown	\$4,352,297	-	-
Total Co-op Sales	\$23,692,544	\$19,503,614	21.48%



membership

In calendar 2024, we experienced a surge in membership growth, much, but not all, linked to the opening of the Germantown store.



Last calendar year, 2,250 households joined the Co-op —our biggest increase since the opening of our Ambler store in 2017. This was largely due to the opening of our Germantown store in May.

Located at 326 W. Chelten Ave., the building that houses our new store was originally an Acme market when it opened in 1955. No commerce had taken place there since the Acme closed in 1972, and the building had been vacant since 2015.

Given its location, the project attracted a great deal of interest from federal, state and local governments, as well as the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation and the Reinvestment Fund, along with several foundations. The property is in a New Market Tax Credit opportunity zone.

Since opening, Weavers Way Germantown has become an important community hub. It has brought new economic life to the Chelten Avenue commercial corridor and created nearly 60 new jobs, none of which require a college degree.



Weavers Way Germantown By the Numbers

Average weekly sales:	\$197,035
Average basket size (Co-op average: \$39.62)	\$36.15
Average daily transactions	778
New jobs	58
New community partners:	16
Co-op member households in Germantown	2,225

employment

In the spring of 2024, the Co-op’s starting hourly rate for entry level employees was raised from \$15.50 to \$16. This puts us in the 90th percentile for grocery retailers in the Philadelphia region. In the fall of 2024, we executed our first of four planned “compression” increases for hourly staff with more than one year of service. In this first round, 40 employees received one-time increases ranging from 25 cents an hour (for one year of service) to \$1.25 hour (for five or more years of service). This round covered employees with anniversary dates in the first quarter of our fiscal year (July-September). Subsequent compression increases will go to hourly staff with anniversary dates in the other three quarters of the fiscal year.

Staff Gender Diversity

	2021	2022	2023	2024
Female	124	126	120	154
Male	123	140	152	182
Non-Binary/ Transgender	N/A	7	15	15
Unidentified	N/A	3	2	1
Total	247	276	289	352

Staff/Management Racial Diversity

	2021		2022		2023		2024	
	Staff	Management	Staff	Management	Staff	Management	Staff	Management
Black	18.10%	10.30%	22.10%	15.20%	19.10%	20.76%	18.54%	18.37%
White	72.60%	87.15%	64.50%	80.40%	55.08%	71.69%	44.70%	55.10%
Asian	3.20%	0.00%	2.50%	0%	1.27%	1.89%	1.99%	2.04%
Hispanic	1.20%	0.00%	1.80%	0%	3.38%	1.89%	1.32%	2.04%
Two or More Races	2.40%	2.55%	4.70%	2.20%	6.35%	0	4.64%	2.04%
Other/ Unidentified	2.00%	0.00%	4.40%	2.20%	14.82%	3.77%	28.81%	20.41%



local

Growing the number of local vendors and the percentage of sales derived from local vendors will help demonstrate the Co-op’s emphasis on locally grown and produced food. Expanding our ability to accept needs-based methods of payment (SNAP, WIC) and growing our own needs-based discount program (Food for All) will help demonstrate our commitment to making the Co-op an accessible place to shop regardless of income.

We attain maximum control of the integrity of the food we sell by operating our own farm, at which we adhere to the highest standards of organic growing practices and fair treatment of workers.



Local Sales (Fiscal Year)

Year	Local Sales	% of Total
2020	\$9,900,000	28%
2021	\$10,533,000	30%
2022	\$11,100,000	30%
2023	\$11,325,000	31%
2024	\$12,270,000	30%

Strategic Goals Achieved in 2024:

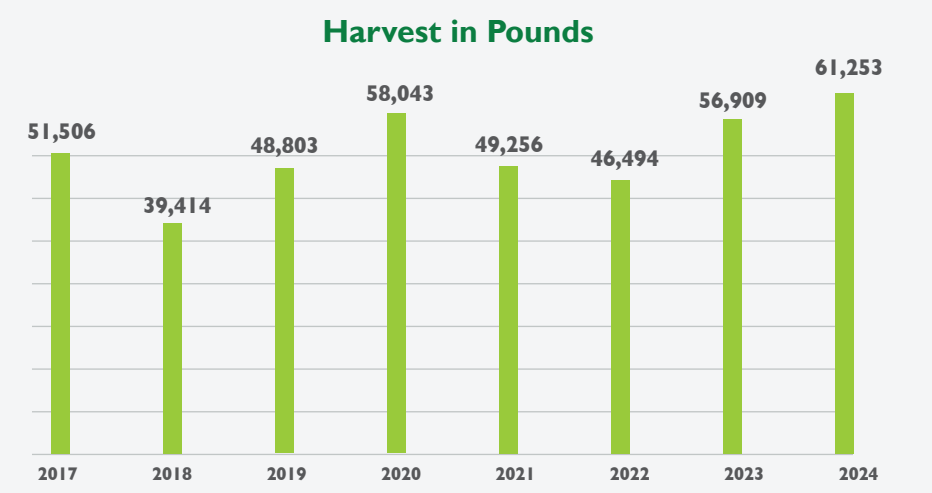
- Updated our product purchasing guidelines.
- Achieved WIC certification in Ambler and Germantown.
- Increased participation in the Food for All and Round Up programs.

In 2024, we continued our commitment to supporting the local food system, which we have historically defined as 150 miles from City Hall. The above data is for fiscal year 2024, so the Germantown store did not have a significant impact.



weavers way farms

Our farm grows approximately 65 annual crops, plus 30 to 40 perennial herb, flower, fruit, nut and berry crops. Farm produce sold to our four stores does not increase our overall commitment to supporting the local food system — this product could easily be replaced by other local produce. But operating a farm market at Saul High School and running the Henry Got Crops CSA does increase the amount of local product we sell.



community giving & partnerships

Food for All

Last year saw explosive growth in our Food for All program, which is now 10 years old. Food for All is our single best way to ensure accessibility to the Co-op for all members of the communities we serve, regardless of household income.

Food for All was created in 2015 as we struggled to address rising food prices. As we recognized that the positive attributes of much of the food we sell — locally grown and produced, all-natural and organic, ethically produced and minimally processed — result in a higher retail price point.

In 2021, we made two important changes to the program: increasing the discount from 10% to 15% and introducing the Round Up program, so members could make modest donations to help offset the increased FFA discount.

Beginning in 2024, the Weavers Way Community Fund, our affiliated nonprofit, began accepting donations through the Round Up program, which allowed those donations to be tax deductible.

As anticipated, the opening of our Germantown store resulted in a surge in Food for All participation.

Strategic Goals Achieved in 2024

- Expanded our Community Partnership program.
- Introduced Co-op members to the Weavers Way Community Fund.

In 2024, we expanded our network of Community Partners, including the Grace Project, the Endicott Community Garden and Stenton Museum. A list of community partners can be provided.

In 2024, the Co-op made donations of cash or goods (mostly food) to more than 75 community organizations, including Mattie Dixon Food Cupboard (Ambler), Friends of the Wissahickon (Chestnut Hill), C.W. Henry School (Mt. Airy), and Face to Face Germantown. A list of all organizations who received donations can be provided.

In part due to the opening of the Germantown store, in 2024 we were able to raise more money through our Giving Twosday program than ever before.



2024 Giving Tuesday Results

1/9/2024	Germantown Community Fridge	\$1,638
2/13/2024	Save the Train Coalition	\$1,554
3/12/2024	Germantown Community Fridge	\$1,946
4/9/2024	World Central Kitchen	\$2,640
5/14/2024	Germantown Community Fridge	\$2,183
6/11/2024	Northwest Mutual Aid	\$1,810
7/9/2024	Food Moxie	\$1,492
8/13/2024	Weavers Way Community Fund	\$1,387
9/10/2024	Food Justice Committee Fund Drive	\$2,082
10/8/2024	Awbury Arboretum	\$2,053
11/12/2024	Weavers Way Environment Committee	\$1,924
12/3/2024	Weavers Way Community Fund	\$2,857
12/10/2024	The Grace Project	\$1,866
Total		\$25,432

environment

Strategic Goals Achieved in 2024

- Improve farm performance.
- Resume charging for new paper bags at checkout.
- Hire a sustainability coordinator.

In 2024, we resumed our policy, suspended when we opened the Ambler store in 2017, of charging 10 cents for new paper bags. This further encourages shoppers to bring their own bags when shopping, or to take bags from each store's bag library or use a free box.

We continue to make improvements to the Container Refund Program. This program is now administered in-house by our sustainability coordinator. Since its inception, the CRP has resulted in nearly 20,000 fewer single-use plastic containers.



spotlight on our community partners

Awbury Arboretum

Founded in 1916 by the Cope family, Awbury Arboretum spans 56 acres in East Germantown. It is the largest open space in this part of Philadelphia and is committed to providing the community a free-to-access green space for enjoyment and education.

Our decades-old partnership with Awbury Arboretum continues to thrive. The Co-op's farm there — officially named the Mort Brooks Memorial Farm — was originally run by a small group of volunteers. It is now the anchor of a thriving network of small farms and community gardens located in Awbury's "Agricultural Village."

"For 25 years, Weavers Way Co-op has been a cornerstone of Awbury's vibrant agricultural village, occupying the largest area of our tenant partners and attracting hundreds of volunteers and visitors each year. We are deeply grateful to Weavers Way and its members for their dedication to sustainable farming, which strengthens our shared mission to connect people with nature, support a healthy city ecosystem, and expand horticultural knowledge."

—Sara Stevenson, Executive Director

Germantown Community Fridges

The Germantown Community Fridges are two 24/7 sidewalk fridges and pantries located at 20 W. Armat St. and 19 E. High St. in Germantown. Their mission is to help fight hunger and food insecurity and provide free, supplemental food to those in need. The fridges are stocked by the community for the community, and anyone who needs food is welcome to take it. They are maintained and stocked by volunteers and community members.

In 2024, the fridges' fiscal sponsor shut down abruptly, and they had no way to receive cash donations. While they searched for a new sponsor, Weavers Way Community Fund accepted donations that were passed on to them.

The fridges are a periodic recipient of our Giving Twosday fundraisers. In addition to the cash donations we raise on their behalf, our farm donates leftover produce, and our Germantown store donates to their Armat fridge via the Germantown Pickup volunteer group.

The Northwest Philadelphia Photo Club, which uses Co-op space for their monthly meetings, makes cash and food donations to the fridges on our behalf.

"Weavers Way has been supporting our mission of combating food insecurity in Germantown for about four years. We receive Giving Twosday funds once or twice yearly, and recycle these funds to shop at the Co-op twice a week. During this time, we mostly buy bananas for our two locations. As we are given the benefit of pricing at cost, those dollars go further."

—Susan Bloch, Germantown Community Fridge

The Clean Energy Co-op

The large, flat roof of our Germantown store was perfectly suited for a solar panel array, but having just opened the store, we did not have the capital necessary for its purchase and installation. By partnering with The Clean Energy Co-op, we were able to achieve our goal of reducing our Germantown store's dependence on non-renewable electricity without the capital outlay.

"The Clean Energy Co-op is truly excited to have partnered with Weavers Way Co-op on the funding of the rooftop solar project at the Germantown store. Since the August installation, we have provided close to 24,000 kilowatt hours of electricity directly to the store using only clean energy — sunshine! The project was installed by Solar States, a local company, will remain on the roof for at least 25 years, and will continue to generate carbon-free electricity."

Both member-owned cooperatives experienced a win with this project, since we share the commitment of increasing sustainability and a healthy environment for our communities. Thanks to all the co-op members who brought this dual co-op project to fruition!"

— The Clean Energy Co-op

A Step Up Academy

Located in Jenkintown, A Step Up Academy is a licensed, pre-K through 12th grade school that incorporates speech and occupational therapy into its academic programming. Their big picture goal is to foster a community that embraces neurodiversity while preparing their students to be active members of society. Like Weavers Way, they are members of the Neurodiverse Employment Network of Philadelphia. Our partnership has so far been limited to internships for current students, but we hope to expand our relationship to include post-graduate job placement.

"We are incredibly grateful for our partnership with Weavers Way, whose collaboration has provided invaluable opportunities for our transition-aged students. Their support aligns perfectly with our vision of preparing our students for the world and the world for our students. Through meaningful, hands-on experiences, Weavers Way has helped equip our students with essential skills, confidence and a sense of belonging in the broader community. We deeply appreciate this partnership and look forward to continuing our shared commitment to fostering growth, independence and inclusion."

—Jamie Jenkins, Head of School

Ready, Set, Plant — and Other Tasks for May in the Garden

by Sally McCabe, for the Shuttle

MAY IS A MONTH FOR BIG CHANCES, BECAUSE we’re right on the cusp of the frost/no frost divide. Let’s divide the month into three time periods: early, when the soil is still cool and we can get in the last of our cool-season crops; late, when the ground warms up and tomatoes will be happy to go in; and Mother’s Day, which has its own set of rules.

Tasks for Early May

This is that awkward time when it’s almost too late to plant cool-season crops like lettuce, spinach, all the cabbage-family veggies and spring root crops like radishes and turnips. So run out and chance one more crop of lettuce and spinach.

Hold off on the tomatoes; night temperatures are still keeping the soil too cool for those, and peppers. Remember: if the soil is too cold for your butt, it’s too cold for tomatoes!

Plant seeds anyway. It may be too early to plant your warm-season transplants like peppers, squash and all those other forbidden things, but stick whatever seeds you want into the ground and let them sort themselves out.

Get ready for butterflies. The cabbage butterfly is currently the most plentiful one out there (*Pieris rapae*). It flits gaily through the garden, gently touching down between flowers and everything in the cabbage family. Much as I admire its seemingly carefree beauty, I know that each delicate touchdown leaves an egg that turns into a green worm with the potential to devastate my garden. Bring out the row covers to keep them away, and the BT (*bacillus thuringiensis*) organic spray for the ones that sneak through.

Plant food for them. Butterflies are an indicator species; their highly visible health (or lack thereof) waves a flag about what’s going on quietly in the environment. Many flowers attract them, but only a few flowers feed their young.

Plant milkweed seeds or plants for the monarchs. Swallowtails will feed on any umbelliferous herbs (the ones that get umbrella-shaped bunches of flowers). Transplant parsley or rue from plants, but sow seeds for fennel, dill, and carrots.

Dig, divide, and replant perennials. Everything healthy eventually gets too crowded and uses up the available space and nutrients in the soil. Many perennials, including daylilies, rudbeckia, echinacea, fall asters, shasta daisies, chrysanthemum, and phlox benefit from being divided. Dig up the clumps, then split into quarters with a shovel or axe. Enrich the soil with compost and reset one of the reduced clumps; move the rest of them around the garden or share with gardening friends.



Prune the azaleas. Because they are a spring-blooming shrub, azaleas set their flower buds in the fall. This means you can shape them now, as soon as they’re done blooming and before their crazy summer growth starts. Cut them to fit the space where you want them but try to do it without turning them into poodle shapes. And while you’re up close and personal with the pruners, check for cottony azalea scale on the undersides of leaves and on stems. Spray with neem oil to smother them while they are still in the moving-around stage, before they get comfy inside their hard shells.

Set up your rain barrel. It used to be “April showers...etc.,” but now that the weather patterns have declared their independence from all the rules, let’s get our reserves in order. Buy or build a rain barrel to connect to your rain spout. Connect several so you can be assured enough water will get your garden through the dry spells that are sure to come.

Clean out water barrels. Give everything a good scrub to get rid of residual algae. I use a toilet brush, since it has a long handle to get down into barrels. I prefer elbow grease and sand or hay as a scrubber if I can’t find my brush. If you feel the need to use a little soap, be sure to dump out rinse water into the driveway or somewhere you’re trying to kill ivy, since soap is seriously alkaline. I’ve noticed there are already mosquito wigglers in barrels, buckets and other reservoirs I’ve filled since winter, so go clean out anything that holds water.

To-Dos for Later In the Month

As we transition from cool to warm, mulch the roots of your cool-season vegetables to insulate them from the warmer weather.

Plant vegetables. Night temperatures are warm enough to plant most vegetable seeds. If you’re putting in transplants, though, make sure you’ve hardened them off beforehand. Get them used to the increased light and decreased temps of the great outdoors by putting them in a sheltered place outside for a day or two before sending them out into the cruel world.

Water your little transplants well before putting them into the ground. (I dip them in a bucket). Also, remember to remove any flowers or fruit so they can concentrate on putting down strong roots first.

Plant tomatoes. The ground should be warm enough for tomatoes and other warm-season transplants like eggplants, peppers, squash and even basil. Snip or pinch off the small fruits, flowers and buds to encourage root growth before fruit growth.

Water. May in the Philly area is either feast or famine for rain. Plants want about an inch of it every week, so be ready to supplement when that doesn’t happen. This is especially true with newly planted trees and shrubs (which are putting out new tender shoots and roots that are easily damaged by dry conditions), and with vegetable gardens.

Social watering (standing and sprinkling plants while you talk to your neighbors) is not enough; learn to read the soil with your fingers to see if there is moisture below the surface. It’s amazing how long you can stand watering, only to find that everything below an inch down is bone dry. Give the ground a good soak.

If you must wet the leaves, try to do that early, before the full sun hits and can burn them. Wetting leaves in the evening sets up perfect conditions for molds and mildews. But given the choice between watering in the evening or not at all, take your chances with mold.

Do violence to your annuals. By now, the ground should be warm enough to put annuals in the ground, but here’s the hard part: Once you get them organized and placed where you want them, you need to snip or pinch off all the flowers and buds. Just do it! This makes the plant concentrate on putting down roots first, instead of ripening seeds (which is what the flowers are for in the first place). Removing the flowers also makes them anonymous for a week and less attractive to small hands that want to pick flowers for Mom on her big day.

A Couple Chores For Mother’s Day

Get her flowers. Find a plant tent and go to town. The day after, go back and see if you can swing a deal for some of the leftover holiday plants and put them in your garden.

Clean her yard. Sure, a handful of cut flowers is lovely, but putting in plants for Mom is a great way to say “I love you.” They last a lot longer and she’s not stuck with yet another vase.

Sally McCabe is Associate Director of Community Education at the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society.





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Zoning Task Force Taking a Close Look at Neighborhood Development

by Steve Kendall, for the Shuttle

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT OF WEST MT. AIRY — streets, buildings, trails, playgrounds, rail lines, gardens and more — has developed unevenly over the years. There have been building booms, contrasted with decades of little change.

When the rail lines came, large estates were subdivided, and a combination of rowhouses, twins, detached houses and apartment buildings began to appear. From the 1920s through the 1940s, several large apartment buildings sprang up within easy walking distance of the Chestnut Hill West stations. These were early examples of TOD (Transit-Oriented Development). Thirty such buildings have just been designated by the city’s Historic District Commission as part of a Thematic Historic Apartment District and will be preserved, thanks to the leadership of West Mt. Airy Neighbors Historic Preservation Initiative. These buildings — some of which are designed simply and others that are more detailed — are accepted parts of our landscape.

Over the past few years, our local landscape has been changing again. Following a decade or two of little development, a recent surge of project proposals has taken some aback. This was especially the case for the five-story apartment building proposed at 309-21 West Mt. Pleasant Ave., which drew 82 people to a public meeting.

As a result of mixed reception for that project and ongoing community feedback, Councilperson Cindy Bass invited the WMAN Board to form a Zoning Re-mapping Task Force. It’s made up of 12 West Mt. Airy residents with a range of experience and deep commitment to the stewardship of our community’s growth. Our

job is to examine the possibility of recommending adjustments to current zoning at three neighborhood commercial areas: Carpenter Lane at Greene Street (the Village); West Mt. Pleasant Avenue from Cresheim Road to Emlen Street (crossing Lincoln Drive); and the node at Greene and Hortter streets (where Mt. Airy Learning Tree, Toto’s Pizza and Pelham Pharmacy are located).

These “neighborhood commercial nodes” are unique in West Mt Airy in that they are zoned CMX2. This designation essentially allows new buildings that are up to 38 feet high with commercial space on the ground floor close to the street and residential units above. No parking is required. CMX2 also permits bonuses for low- or moderate-income housing which allows seven feet of additional height and up to four or five floors.

The WMAN Task Force began work in early January and held a community open house on Jan. 8 that was attended by more than 100 residents. Attendees could offer feedback on each focus area and share their views on the current state of the built environment in the neighborhood and its future. WMAN also distributed a build environment survey and received 184 responses. To similar questions. Following the initial community feedback session, the Task Force has been meeting biweekly. We seek to better understand how current zoning functions and how any changes we might propose could impact our community’s top priorities, most notably tree canopy and open space, diversity and housing affordability.

Beyond community input, we have focused on interpreting census data, investigating various means of transportation (rail, bus, cars, bicycles, walking), under-

standing historic preservation options, and studying other pertinent issues that may be impacted by potential zoning changes. Following our comprehensive examination, we will generate proposals for any changes to current zoning and will hold additional community input meetings.

Once refined, we will present our recommendations to the City Planning Commission and Councilperson Bass for their consideration. If our recommendations meet their approval, one or more ordinances will be drafted and heard in City Council, which would then vote on them.

We expect this work will continue for several months, likely into the summer. This will allow the task force to do its work thoughtfully, based on its own research and analysis. Most importantly, there will be several opportunities for citizen input.

Steve Kendall is president of WMAN and a member of the Zoning Task Force.





Join Mt. Airy Learning Tree for our
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Sunday, June 1 • 11 am to 4 pm
Tickets: \$35 advance; \$40 day-of-tour tickets

Explore enchanted gardens filled with blooming trees and vibrant flowers. Enjoy a self-paced, self-guided tour and discover perennial favorites, vegetables, native and habitat-friendly plants. Learn about innovative solutions to challenging terrains and spaces. This year we have 7 hidden gardens PLUS a Native Plant Stroll in West Mt. Airy!

Check in, pick up your booklet/map: 11 am - 1 pm at Ned Wolf Park
The garden tour is rain or shine. It is not a walking tour; driving is recommended. We will also provide a bike route.

Ned Wolf Park, 7018 McCallum Street (at the corner of Ellet St.)



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New Interim Director Shares Her Faves About the Wissahickon

by Sarah Marley, Friends of the Wissahickon Interim Executive Director

THIS PAST MARCH, FRIENDS OF THE WISSAHICKON said farewell to Ruffian Tittmann, our executive director and a close colleague and friend. This is certainly the start of a new chapter at the organization, and in the interim I'm eager to support the staff, volunteers and Wissahickon community as the organization's executive director.

Amid this leadership transition, I want to introduce myself by mentioning a few of my favorite Wissahickon things.

Friends of the Wissahickon I joined FOW as an intern with the Student Conservation Association in 2010. I was inspired by its community spirit, and amazed that I hadn't ever discovered this beautiful 2,000-acre park located up the road from where I grew up. Soon after, I joined the FOW team full time as outreach coordinator and became a part of senior leadership in 2018 as its development director.

Fingerspan Bridge I always make time to appreciate the place where I dedicate so much of my professional life. I enjoy connecting with myself and nature while visiting some of my favorite Wissahickon landmarks, like the Fingerspan Bridge on the Orange Trail. This permanent art installation, designed by Jody Pinto, was set up in 1987, and is still adored and serves as a passage through the Valley. If you'd like to learn more about the structure from the artist, join us for our Valley Talk on May 14 by registering at fow.org/events.

Volunteers In my first full-time role at FOW, I worked closely with our volunteer corps, supporting service days and helping trail ambassadors coordinate their popular free, guided hike series. While the capacity in which I work with our 2,200-plus annual volunteers has changed, I still hold a deep appreciation for their work. Our volunteers dedicated more than 19,000 hours in 2024 to improving and beautifying the park, and their work is never done. Want to get involved? Join us for our Love Your Park service day on May 10 by registering at fow.org/events.

The changing seasons Summer to fall, winter to spring, there's nothing like watching the Wissahickon transform every year; the only downside is that it's hard to choose which season I like best. With so many species of trees in the park, it's mystifying to see them all change in a symphony of reds, greens, oranges and yellows throughout the season. It's also refreshing to see the trees shed their leaves and watch the landscape I knew so well become new again. In late fall, for instance, the lack of tree cover makes it possible to see farther across the valley.

Meadows The lush Houston and Andorra meadows are the perfect place for beginners to hike, enthusiasts to birdwatch, and everyone to transport themselves to what feels like a place far outside city limits. I love using apps like eBird and iNaturalist to identify and track the diverse flora and fauna in the park. There's so much to discover so close to home.



Sarah Marley

Even after 15 years with FOW, I'm still uncovering new adventures in the Wissahickon; this new role is just the most recent. While we'll miss her dearly, Ruffian has positioned FOW well for success, and I can't wait to see what the future holds for our century-old organization. We hope you'll join us for an exciting summer of programming, stewardship and joy in Philadelphia's urban gem.



THIS YEAR'S ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE GRANT RECIPIENTS

Thank you to everyone who supported last month's Electronics Recycling event hosted by the Environment Committee. Your donations supported grants given to community groups from many areas of the city and suburbs.

The groups that received grants are listed below, along with what they plan to use them for:

- **DePaul USA** and **Whosoever Gospel Mission** (Germantown): Plants and planters
- **Folkshul** humanist Jewish community center (Chestnut Hill): Seeds and compost
- **Water Tower Recreation Center** (Chestnut Hill): Flowers and mulch
- **Our Mother of Consolation Parish** (Chestnut Hill): Native plants
- **Friends of Turtle Park** (Roxborough): Planting a pollinator garden.
- **Sovereign Siblings** relational wellness organization (East Falls): Seeds and compost for education programs; food for the community
- **Land Health Institute** (West Parkside): Native trees and nesting material for their nature educational programs
- **Historic Hope Lodge** (Fort Washington): Seeds and plants for native garden
- **Redeemer Valley Farm** (Huntingdon Valley): Native trees
- **Greater Germantown Residents for Economic Alternatives Together:** Plants, tools and seeds
- **Wild Indigo Poetry Series** (Northwest Philly) and **Reclaim Philadelphia** (community organization): Packaging seeds with bookmarks.

We thought it might be helpful for contributors to visit a site that received a grant, so people can see how their funds were used. So Historic Hope Lodge in Fort Washington will host a garden tour and presentation on June 8 as part of a three-workshop series. See the listing in the Events Calendar of the Co-op's website for more information and to register.

—Sandra Folzer



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Sustainability Efforts Extend from Spain to the Theater and Beyond

by Sandra Folzer, Weavers Way Environment Committee

Editor’s Note: Here’s Sandy’s semi-regular roundup of environmental efforts, near and far.

I JUST RETURNED FROM A TRIP TO Spain, and was impressed with their sustainability practices.

While there, I traveled everywhere on buses or trains. Both were efficient, fast, clean and...crowded. People actually use public transportation there, and it is subsidized by the government. In addition, bike lanes were everywhere and were used.

While in Spain, I never saw a styro-foam container. Coca Cola was sold only in glass bottles.

Hotels used refillable soap containers and offered shower caps and tissues in paper bags.

On some streets, there were large containers marked clearly with a picture of a leaf, a fish and an apple core for organic material. There were other containers marked for glass only, paper and cardboard, cans and other containers, and finally, one marked “Resto”, which was self explanatory. There was a container for everything, and residents were expected to sort their own waste, I assume. I did not see trash on the street or plastic bags flying through the air.

Promoting Sustainability In Home Building and Selling

I was horrified recently to hear how a realtor “staged” a neighbor’s house in order to sell it, which is a common practice. They advised my neighbors to put in

white wall-to-wall carpet throughout the house to make it look good, knowing it would be trashed. And that’s what happened — the new owners are now ripping out the white carpet. Think of the waste!

Realtors are notorious for staging, which has a high environmental cost. Sometimes special

furniture is transported to the house, which necessitates large truck traffic with concomitant carbon emissions.

Thankfully, some realtors are advised to use “virtual staging,” which has little environmental impact. Bella Staging in Toronto educates clients and realtors about the environmental cost of traditional staging.

Forbes claims that eco-friendly homes sell faster. And according to Businesswire, more than a third of the world’s consumers want and are willing to pay for eco-friendly alternatives like solar panels. Buyers recognize that going sustainable also saves them money on future energy needs. If buyers demand it, builders are more likely to construct homes with sustainability in mind.

Going Eco-Friendly In the Theater industry

We are avid fans of local theater, like Quintessence and Stagecrafters, both of which are excellent. I know Quintessence uses local vendors, which benefits the community and reduces emissions from transportation. Stagecrafters has a drinking fountain instead of plastic water bottles. I have asked the Walnut Street The-

ater to reinstate their drinking fountain and not sell water in plastic bottles.

In the theater, sustainability concerns range from materials for costumes and sets to the refreshment stand. It’s important to encourage the cast and crew to be eco-conscious. Theaters can also promote public transportation for the audience and crew. I can appreciate how online ticketing and digital programs reduce paper waste.

Theaters are wise to evaluate the environmental impact of a production. How much energy and fuel is used, and how much material waste is created?

The Dutch National Opera in Amsterdam aims for carbon neutrality. They have a Green Deal program in which they offer contracts to creative teams that commit to using at least 50% recycled material. They also keep a database for props and costumes that they have in storage.

Clearly, this is easier to do in the Netherlands, where sustainability is popular and the company gets funding from the government. When the opera house was first built in 1919, it was certified by BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) which is comparable to LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification in the United States. It requires solar panels, green methods of waste disposal and programs to promote biodiversity, like installing gardens and bird houses. The opera company also employs a sustainability coordinator.



weavers waycoop

Environment Committee

eco tip 

A Couple Helpful Ways to Help Your Local Bees

by Marsha Low, Weavers Way Environment Committee

Things aren’t looking good for bees these days. Honey bee colonies are projected to decline by up to 70% this year due to a combination of factors, including pesticide use, habitat loss, climate change and mite infestations. These threats are affecting both honey bees and wild bee populations and have profound consequences for pollination. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, bees of all sorts pollinate approximately 75% of the fruits, nuts and vegetables grown in the United States.

If you have a garden, planting bee-friendly plants such as bee balm, asters, Joe Pye weed, coneflowers, milkweed, yarrow and goldenrod, among others, will help. Following pollinator-friendly practices in your garden during fall and spring cleanups, as I’ve written about in previous Eco Tips, will also help native bees.

Year-round, except in winter, bees need water, especially in hot weather. They can drown if they can’t drink safely, so you can help them by placing in your garden some wide, shallow containers of water that have pebbles or marbles in them.

Last thing: For goodness sake, please don’t use pesticides!

Three New Directors Elected to Board; Rep. Dean Speaks at GMM



photos by Chris Raines
Cheryl Croxton and Hilary



(Continued from Page 1)

Roesser said that current economic conditions are trending toward the negative, but that the Co-op is well positioned to weather any downturn that may come about. However, looming tariffs and the price increases likely to come with them have increased the degree of uncertainty on the horizon.

Prior to the formal meeting, attendees enjoyed a meal of meat and vegan hotdogs, green and Portuguese grain salads, apples, cookies and chips. Several members entertained the crowd with live

instrumental music.

Dean went through the various steep cuts to government agencies and programs, including SNAP, Medicaid and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, proposed in President Trump’s budget. She assured the audience that she intends to push back on a “cruel” and “lawless” administration that “embraces bigotry.”

“I say that not as a Democrat; I say it as a citizen,” she said. “This is not about Democrats and Republicans. It’s about an

administration that doesn’t give a damn about the little guy, doesn’t care about the vulnerable, the hungry, the poor.”

Dean also took questions from the audience, which also focused on the current political climate in Washington. Topics included advice on the most effective ways for constituents to make themselves heard, how Congress can regain its status as an equal branch of government and whether impeaching Trump a third time would be effective.



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1

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3

Member-Owner Economic Participation

4

Autonomy and Independence

5

Education, Training and Information

6

Cooperation Among Cooperatives

7

Concern for Community

Norman’s ‘Suggestions’ column is taking the month off while he recuperates. Look for his insights and witty grocery biz commentary in the June Shuttle.

WEAVERS WAY EVENTS

Chair Yoga Class for Rest and Relaxation with Mira McEwan

Monday, May 12

6:30-7:30 p.m.

Virtual Event

Join Mira for a session of chair yoga to de-stress and decompress. The class will include gentle stretches and Pranayama breath exercises to help you feel better and sleep better. This session is suitable for all experience levels. Mira is passionate about making yoga fun and accessible to people of all ages and abilities. She is a Weavers Way working member and has been a registered nurse for 25 years. You will receive a zoom link to attend these sessions after you register to attend the series.

Weavers Way Education Committee Reboot

Thursday, May 15

6:30-7:30 p.m.

Summit Presbyterian Church Parlor, 6757 Greene St., Mt. Airy

This inaugural meeting seeks to re-energize the Education Committee’s mission to educate and train members to better inform the Co-op and community of what Weavers Way is, does and aspires to be. Please email wooo3d@gmail.com to RSVP. Please enter through the Greene Street entrance and you will be guided to the Parlor.

Weavers Way Education Committee Reboot

Saturday, May 17

10-11 a.m.

The Café at Weavers Way Ambler

Weavers Way Ambler, 217 E. Butler Ave.

See listing for above for Thursday, May 15.

Virtual New Member Orientation

Tuesday, May 20

6:30-8 p.m.

We encourage all new members to attend a member orientation. Our virtual orientation will include an overview of membership at the Co-op, how it works and why it’s valuable. We’ll explore our online Member Center, discuss the benefits of membership and help you choose if working membership is right for you. You will receive two hours working member credit (the orientation lasts approximately 1 ½ hours). You will receive a zoom link by email prior to the meeting. Please sign up at the Member Center.

Co-op Social: Game Night at Weavers Way Ambler

Wednesday, May 28

6-7:30 p.m.

Weavers Way Ambler, 217 E. Butler Ave.

Bring your friends or meet new ones while playing board games in our café! We will kick off this month’s game night with a couple rounds of bingo, followed by board games. We’ll have a selection of snacks and a few games to get things started, but feel free to bring your favorites to share. Make a night of it – grab something from our prepared foods section and settle in for some friendly competition. All ages are welcome, and it’s BYOB for the grownups. Come for the games – stay for the great company!

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For more info: www.weaversway.coop/events

McGoran to Discuss Latest Book at Booked

(Continued from Page 1)

tech thrillers “Drift,” “Deadout,” and “Dustup.”

In “The Price of Everything,” the world has been ravaged by climate change and corruption, and cyberwarfare has caused the internet to collapse, leaving an all-cash economy in its wake. Armond Pierce is part of a guild of elite couriers who transport ultra-high denomination currency in attaché cases chained to titanium cuffs that are grafted onto the bones of their wrists.

When Armond suddenly finds that his case is empty, he’s forced to go on the run from his own guild’s assassins and navigate a dense network of oligarchs, drug dealers, private police forces and radical climate activists to uncover a scheme that could change everything.

“The Price of Everything” is published by Solaris Books and distributed through Simon & Schuster. For more information on McGoran, visit www.jonmcgoran.com.

Field Assistants Share Skills in New Settings

started to feel less meaningful and sustainable to me, and I got heavily involved in my neighborhood’s community farm. The relationships I built with my neighbors and the pride I took in nurturing that space lit me up about the expansive, world-bettering possibilities of urban agriculture.

I realized I wanted to spend much more time at the garden than my job would allow. So I pivoted. I left New York to start working and learning on farms full-time as an Americorps volunteer, first in West Virginia, then Vermont.

In Vermont, I worked at the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps’ teaching farm. While there, I led one of many crews of teenagers and young adults who put together over 450 free shares of fresh food every week to Vermonters who were experiencing food insecurity. I love getting to introduce people (young and old) to the farm, and de-mystifying the process of growing food. And I love that I can now extend this to my work at Henry Got Crops with students from Saul High as well as co-op cooperators.

As a field assistant, my role is to help my managers carry out whatever tasks are necessary to keep the farm running, and making sure we’re getting the best quality food into stores and CSA boxes. This entails everything

from creating beds to harvesting, and the dozens of tasks that make up the in-between.

With only a couple seasons of farming under my belt, there’s so much left to learn! Every year, my foundation gets stronger and I’m able to ask better questions and deepen my understanding of the intricacies of a farm operation. At Henry, I’m excited to be working on a smaller scale operation (a little over half the size of my farm in Vermont!). Here, I can have a more intimacy with each of our crops, and better understand management decisions about irrigation, pest management, and weeding.

Moving East to Supplement My Growing Knowledge

by Lucy Jones, Mort Brooks Memorial Farm Field Assistant

I GREW UP ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF YOUNGSTOWN, OH. We had a huge backyard that connected to part of a large metropark, so I was always outside playing, and my parents had a garden. I hated helping to pull weeds, but thought the corn plants were cool.

I started studying anthropology in college and realized how important food production is to fostering eco-

logical sustainability, love, and care in a community. I started gardening and did that for a few years before I gave agriculture a serious try at an urban farm in Columbus, OH. I spent three seasons there, which flew by because I was having so much fun. Earlier this year, I moved to Philadelphia and started working at Mort Brooks Memorial Farm at Awbury Arboretum.

This year, I want to learn more about native medicinal plants and beneficial non-vegetable plants and their uses. I also want to think up creative new ways to cook with our crops — always a goal!

Now that I know the basics, I’m getting interested in experimenting with new techniques. With farming, there are so many little ways you can do something that can have big effects. I want to use my previous experience to make suggestions and learn to do different things that may work better.

Working on a farm connected to a co-op is interesting because it’s supported by a community with history and roots. I’ve worked for nonprofit farms previously that served the community, but it was mainly us reaching out to try to build those relationships. With co-op farms, I can sense there is a stable base that is interested in the goings-on of the farm, and is making the choice to engage with local food production.



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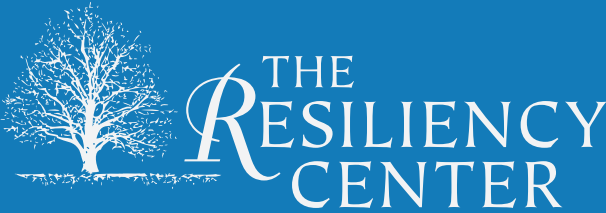
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the word on wellness

A Healthy Approach to Weight Loss from a Former ‘Big Girl’

by Karen Palmer, Weavers Way Ambler Wellness Buyer

I AM A FORMER “BIG GIRL.” AT ONE POINT IN MY LIFE, I WAS A size 22-24, and five feet tall.

As a child of the ‘60s, I grew up during the advent of women’s magazines, and television commercials, that featured targeted ads for weight loss pills (remember Dexedrine or Ephedra?) followed by weight loss “programs” (think Jenny Craig). I did it all. If there was a gimmick to encourage me to lose weight, I was all in.

I struggled with my weight my entire life, and I have been hungry my entire life. Then I stopped struggling. I now weigh about 135 pounds and have been holding steady at that weight for about four years.

What did I do? I modified my diet and started exercising regularly.

The biggest modification was my mindset; I decided to focus on my health rather than weight. I set a vision of myself that was healthy and visualized her in vivid detail so that when I didn’t want to do the thing I was supposed to do, she was my inspiration.

Ta-da! It works for me. I am at the gym doing resistance and cardiovascular training two to three times a week at 6 a.m. and prioritize protein in my diet. My future self is relying on me, and I don’t want to let her down.

It’s hard. I will do this for the rest of my life.

Do you know what else was hard? Being heavy. I remember what I could not do because of my weight. I felt awful all the time, physically and mentally. Food was a tool that I used for comfort.

Both choices are difficult. Staying heavy meant that I was out of breath a lot, and the disapproving gazes of people as I struggled were soul-crushing. Working out and modifying my diet made me step way outside of my comfort zone and led to anxiety about yet one more failure.

Despite how hard this was, I decided to stick with it. Then along came GLP-1 drugs, which seemed too good to be true.

GLP-1 Drugs and Weight Loss

GLP-1 receptor agonists, such as Ozempic, Mounjaro and Victoza, were originally developed to help manage type 2 diabetes. These medications help regulate blood sugar by stimulating insulin release, reducing glucagon production and slowing digestion.

However, during clinical trials, researchers noticed that patients also experienced significant weight loss. This led to further studies and, ultimately, approval by the Food and Drug Administration of certain GLP-1 drugs that were designed specifically for weight loss, including Wegovy (semaglutide) and Zepbound (tirzepatide).

Many non-diabetics are using GLP-1 drugs off-label for weight loss, particularly Ozempic and Mounjaro, which are technically diabetes medications. The popularity of these drugs has led to widespread demand and shortages, sometimes making it difficult for diabetics to access them.

Most users of GLP-1 drugs report initial side effects like nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and constipation. However, lesser-known side effects are emerging, particularly in women. One such concern is hair loss. A recent study from the University of British Columbia found that semaglutide users experienced higher rates of hair shedding compared to those on other weight loss medications, with women being more affected.

Another issue is facial aging, or “Ozempic face.” Rapid weight loss can cause the face to lose fat, leading to sagging skin and an aged appearance. This is common with any fast weight loss, but it is particularly noticeable in those who use these medications.

A more serious concern is gallbladder health. Some individuals on GLP-1 drugs, including two friends of mine, have developed calcified gallbladders that required emergency surgery. Studies indicate that these medications can increase the risk of gallstones, particularly when rapid weight loss occurs.

Bone health is also a growing concern. While some research suggests that GLP-1 drugs may promote bone formation, other studies indicate a possible increase in fracture risk due to decreased bone mineral density. This can be particularly problematic for postmenopausal women, who are already at higher risk for osteoporosis.

Nutrition and Movement Matter

One of the biggest misconceptions about these drugs is that people can continue eating processed, nutrient-poor foods without consequences. GLP-1s suppress appetite, meaning many users eat significantly less. But what they eat matters more than ever.

Relying on ultra-processed foods can lead to nutrient deficiencies, muscle loss and increased risk of gallbladder complications. A diet rich in lean proteins, healthy fats, fiber and whole foods can help preserve muscle mass, maintain skin elasticity and support overall health.

Alongside proper nutrition, regular movement — especially resistance training — is crucial for those on GLP-1 medications. Since rapid weight loss can lead to muscle loss, engaging in strength training exercises like weightlifting, resistance bands or bodyweight workouts can help preserve muscle mass and maintain metabolic health.

Cardiovascular exercise is beneficial for heart health, but resistance training will help prevent the frailty of-

ten associated with rapid weight loss. Even simple activities like walking, yoga or Pilates can provide benefits, but incorporating some form of weight-bearing exercise is essential to maintain strength, mobility and long-term wellness.

Natural Weight Loss Alternatives

For those who want to lose weight naturally and sustainably, here are some proven strategies:

- **Prioritize Protein:** Protein helps muscle retention, satiety and metabolism regulation. Aim for lean meats, eggs, dairy, legumes and plant-based sources.
- **Stay Hydrated:** Water is crucial for digestion, metabolism and appetite control.
- **Eat Whole Foods:** Focus on vegetables, whole grains, healthy fats and fiber-rich foods to provide lasting energy and prevent cravings.
- **Strength Train Regularly:** Resistance training builds lean muscle, which helps maintain metabolic health and long-term weight control.
- **Manage Stress:** Chronic stress raises cortisol levels, which can lead to fat retention, particularly around the midsection. Yoga, meditation and deep breathing can help.
- **Get Enough Sleep:** Poor sleep disrupts hunger hormones and increases cravings for unhealthy foods.
- **Create a Vision for Your Health:** Visualization and goal setting can keep you motivated and committed to a long-term wellness journey.

Supportive Supplements at the Co-op

If you’re looking to support your metabolism and blood sugar naturally, the Co-op carries several products that can be helpful, including:

- **Source Naturals BerberTrim** – Berberine has been shown to support healthy blood sugar levels and metabolic function, making it a natural alternative for managing weight and insulin resistance.
- **Natural Factors WellBetX Berberine** – Another great source of berberine, which may help regulate glucose metabolism and support cardiovascular health.
- **Natural Factors Fermented Apple Cider Vinegar with Chromium** – Apple cider vinegar is believed to aid digestion and metabolism, while chromium helps regulate blood sugar and curb cravings.

If you want to lose weight, please consider your future self’s health, not just appearance, during your weight loss journey. Weight loss is only beneficial if your overall health improves as well.





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Artists in Our Aisles

Paul Rappaport

Photography serves as my window to the visual universe. The camera lens allows the viewer to see through the “eye” of the photographer and share his or her unique perceptions and interpretations of the world around them.



The camera has been my artistic companion for over 40 years. In my travels and through my empathy for the human condition, I have used it to capture the remarkable beauty of our world, the experiences of the people who populate it, and the interactions between them.

Along the way, my interests and participation in psychology, eastern philosophy and meditation, martial arts, physical fitness, public speaking, music, writing and publishing have influenced what I see through the lens.

I’ve exhibited my work in various settings, from New York City to Bryn Mawr to Wayne. My work has appeared in publications and at charitable community programs. My most recent local exhibition took place at William Jeanes Memorial Library in Lafayette Hill.

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- A link to a website if you have one

Weavers Words

Editor’s Note: Last month, the Shuttle ran a poem with this title in Weavers Words. However, it wasn’t the correct poem. We apologize for the error.

THE DAY THE SOUL AGREES TO INHABIT THE BODY

The moaning of a door
opening and closing
slowly, cold sun creaking

the topmost layer of icy
water. Naked trees caressing
the air, circling the lake,

branches willing upwards.
Crab apples fallen
And swallowed by

Frozen earth; so much
unexplained joy. Wispy
clouds beguiled by the

sun, shadows darkening
against themselves in
iridescent grief. Intention

stuttering, weeping. The gift
of feeling familiar. One
must lift the weight and

bear it. Solitary,
but not quite alone.

—Mira McEwan (reprinted with permission)

We’re all poets

And we don’t even know it

Like me

And my ancestor, Robert (E) Lee

(Frost)

& we’re all embarrassed by our daddies

Like my son

& Me

And our ancestors

*

Good fences make good neighbors

But no fences make better ones

Especially if your next-door neighbor is
more mature

Like Mother Nature

—Michael Frost

WHAT GOOD’S A PENNY?

Oh, what can you buy for a cent, My Dear,
And what good’s a penny or two?
There are many Johns
Who would step on a bronze,
And those who bend over are few.

A cent is an infinitesimal piece
Of any one person’s estate.
It’s value’s minute,
Nearly worthless as loot —
To claim the reverse would misstate.

A penny has so little value, in fact,
Its beauty is hard to behold.
Still, I must advise
That a cent multiplies
With interest and turns into gold.

Each poem for you tenders part of my love,
A miniscule fraction at best.
You may think it weird
That I’ve now engineered
A centum of verses, possessed.

I like to examine each sensuous change,
Concentric perceptions, forthright.
Now let me rejoin,
“I’ll centuple each coin,
As verses with interest I write.”

For each little poem contains a percent
Of rapture that I can’t ignore.
This gift’s no expense,
And I hope you can sense
I’ve love for a centillion more.

—Chris Robinson

Our Revised Submission Guidelines:

1. Original poems must be of a reasonable length. Lengthy poems that are the subject of a reflection will be excerpted.
2. The Shuttle editor has the final say as to whether a poem or reflection is suitable for publication.
3. The number of poems or reflections in an issue is determined by the amount of space available.
4. Members and nonmembers are welcome to submit.
5. Email your submissions to editor@weaversway.coop and put “Poetry submission (or reflection) for Shuttle” in the subject line.



Imagining a World Without Waste

Should You Buy Food In Plastic Packaging?

Science has known for at least 15 years that plastics and chemicals in food packaging leach into our food. But while there are concerns about health impacts, scientific findings often take 15 years or more to reach the public.

Potential chemical exposures include some phthalates — endocrine disruptors — that are allowed in food packaging. Nine phthalates, used as plasticizers in food contact containers, are authorized in the United States, but a declaration of the use of phthalates is not required by the Food Packaging and Labeling Act.

The Food and Drug Administration considers the current levels of bisphenol A (BPA), another endocrine disruptor used in food packaging, to be safe. However, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is concerned about low-dose exposures to BPA. In their health survey in 2003-04, they found BPA in 93% of a large sample of Americans six years and older. These and other endocrine disruptors interact with hormone receptors in the body to mimic, block or interfere with hormone production, transport or metabolism in a way that is either inappropriate or excessive.

Chemicals used in the production of plastic, including PFAS in food and milk packaging and perchlorates (in food packaging until 2017) are known to induce neurological diseases and disorders and even change the way early development occurs. The Environmental Protection Agency committed to a National Primary Drinking Water Regulation for perchlorate to be issued this year, with a final regulation by May 2027. We will see if the current administration does that.

In addition to chemicals in plastics, the plastics in food packaging are a problem, especially at the nanoplastic size (less than a half micrometer). They enter the human body when plastic particles break off, which they begin to do as soon as plastic is placed in the environment. The chemicals used to produce them then leach into food and beverages.

As technological advances make it possible to quantify and type plastics in different mediums, we are finding that there are far more nanoplastics in water, milk, juice and foods than we ever thought. Scientists have also found that nanoplastics and their chemicals can cross the blood-brain-barrier, a complex, multi-part defense system designed to protect the brain and placenta.

Some of the actions that release plastics from food packaging include any kind of friction during transport, opening and resealing plastic containers, tearing off plastic films on food, heating food in plastic containers (including microwaving), and long-term storage in plastic packaging.

When we open plastic-wrapped food, we can inhale nano and microplastics that may reach the bloodstream. And of course, drinking from plastic containers directly introduces nano and microplastics into the body.

Fatty foods such as cheese and meat attract more



plastic-derived chemicals, and acidic and alcoholic foods promote more chemical leaching. These are then ingested with the food and liquids.

There are other ways that plastics and their chemicals contaminate our foods, including the handling, materials and equipment used to bring the farm to the store. But this article is limited to educating consumers to consider their choices at the point of purchase.

One of the products that transmits the most concentrated dose of nano and microplastics into our digestive tracts is a single tea bag that's steeped in hot water. Many tea bags are still made with plastics, even though they appear to be made of paper.

While baby bottles and sippy cups can no longer contain BPA, polypropylene baby bottles, the most common type prepared with formula, shed hundreds of thousands of microplastics in each bottle. This packaging is not healthy for infants, who are exposed to more microplastics in a year than adults. Plastic baby bottles can be substituted with easily found glass bottles and metal sippy cups.

—Carol Armstrong

Microplastics Are Everywhere

A March article in Vox reported on several studies showing that rain throughout the world is contaminated with microplastics and PFAS chemicals. Microplastics come from the breakdown of plastic items such as soda and water bottles, are light enough to be carried into the atmosphere and are re-deposited through rain.

One study of parks in the western United States estimated that more than 1,000 metric tons of plastic fell on the parks every year and came from both rain and dust. The most common type found was microfibers — the kind shed by polyester clothing such as fleece.

PFAS are often referred to as forever chemicals because they include chains of carbon and fluorine atoms that are so strongly bonded, they don't break down. They have been used in many applications, including fire retardants and nonstick coatings.

Water treatment removes some of the microplastics and PFAS from drinking water. But both tap and bottled water still contain these pollutants, and polluted rain falls everywhere.

A study published in March in the Journal of Hazardous Materials found that fertilizers applied in U.S. agriculture often use pellets to time-release nutrients, and those pellets may be coated in plastic. The coating breaks down over time — another way that microplastics end up in our food and water.

Last month, the New York Times reported that a study and ongoing research at the University of New Mexico found that the amount of microplastics found in a human body increased by 50% between 2016 and 2024. What's more, researchers found that the brain alone may contain as much plastic as five water bottle caps.

—Karen Melton

The Basics of Bulk Shopping

Shopping in the bulk section is kinder to the planet and are fortunate at Weavers Way to have so many items available in bulk. Remember that bringing your own jar or borrowing one from the store's jar library lessens the amount of plastic waste you use and saves you 25 cents per jar. Although there are paper and plastic bags available, with so much concern these days about microplastics in our bodies, reusing gives us one less thing to worry about.

Even though I've been shopping in the bulk section of stores for several decades, including at the Co-op, I recently got to the checkout line with my bulk items and discovered that I forgot to tare my jars. Apparently, it's a common mistake.

Here are instructions for those who are new to shopping in the bulk department, and a refresher for lapsed bulk shoppers:

1. Remember to bring your containers with you to shop or borrow them from the jar library. If you borrow a jar, please clean and return it to the Co-op when you are finished with it. These will be further cleaned and made available for the next customer.
2. Tare (weigh while empty) your container on a nearby scale. Write the tare weight on masking tape or on the labels provided nearby.
3. If your desired product is in a lidded container, use a clean scoop to transfer the product into your jar. If the product is in a bin with a pull-down handle, place your jar under the spout and release the handle slowly. For small-mouthed jars, there are funnels available.
4. On the same label as the tare or on another label, write the PLU code, which is on each bulk container. You may also want to write down the name of the product for your own use.

—Becca Dickstein

These Jar Library Tips Are Still in Effect

- Tell the bulk staffer on duty when you are dropping off your jars, so they can inspect them to see if they are appropriate for the jar library.
- Drop off clean, dry glass containers only — no plastic containers.
- Remove labels as much as possible. Volunteers maintain the jar library; the more labels there are to remove, the harder their job becomes.
- Larger jars are especially appreciated, e.g. tomato sauce or quart sized. Also consider if the jar you're donating would be useful.
- If the incoming jar box is full, please do not leave your jars. Currently there is no place to store surplus jars.
- For any item you buy in bulk using your own container or a container from the jar library, you will receive a 25-cent discount at the register.







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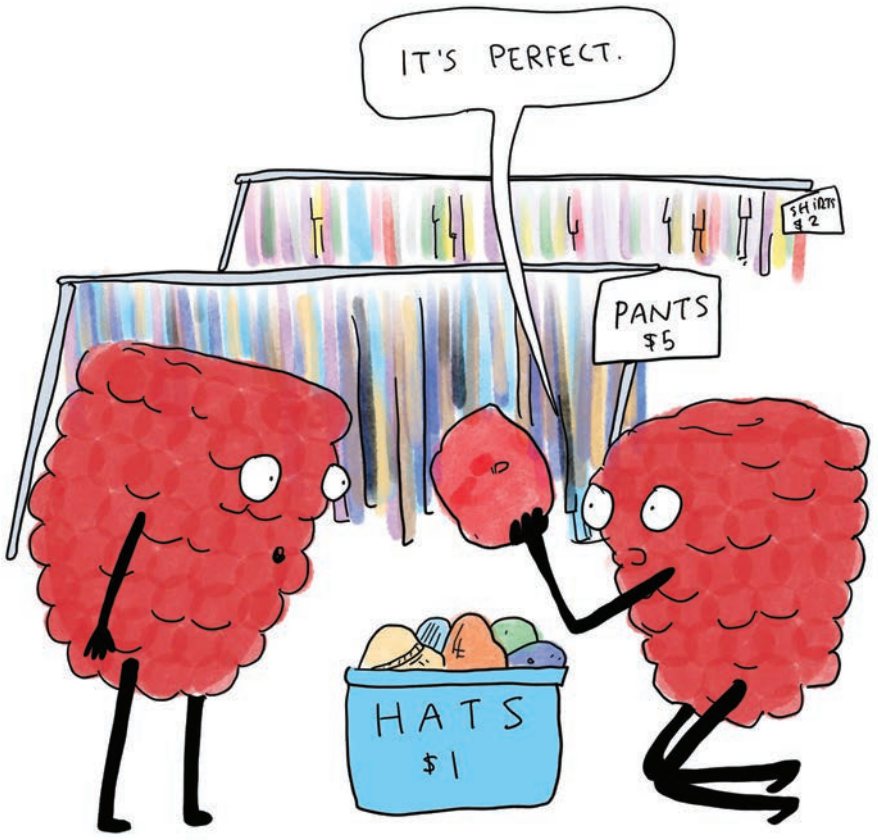


Questions?

member@weaversway.coop
or 215-843-2350, ext. 119

Locally Grown

Illustration by Alli Katz





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What's What & Who's Who at Weavers Way

Weavers Way Board

The Weavers Way Board of Directors represents members' interests in the operation of the stores and the broader vision of the Co-op.

The Board's regular monthly meeting is held on the first Tuesday of the month. Check the Co-op's Calendar of Events for the date of the next meeting.

For more information about Board governance and policies, visit www.weaversway.coop/board. Board members' email addresses are at www.weaversway.coop/board-directors, or contact the Board Administrator at boardadmin@weaversway.coop or 215-843-2350, ext. 118.

2024-2025 Weavers Way Board of Directors

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Germantown
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Grocery Manager
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DID YOU KNOW?

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www.weaversway.coop/shuttle-online



NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION

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6:30-8:00 pm

To register visit: www.weaversway.coop/events

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